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CONQUER THE ISLE OF DREAD!

DUNGEON®

ISSUE 143 · FEBRUARY 2007

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FOIL THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY!

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WOLFGANG BAUR'S DUNGEONCRAFT › DOWNER › MT. ZOGON

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"As quickly as he had smashed the mirrors, two more reflections had escaped. Now they stood facing him, three duplicates of himself down to the puckered round scar on his side, all staring at him, faces twisted with hatred and contempt, with a strange hunger. Only their eyes seemed empty, lifeless. Before he could take a breath, they rushed at him."

Robert Jordan
"The Shadow Rising"

DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 3/31/07.

RPGA NETWORK

Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:
Riding the Rail (143RR1DN)
Tides of Dread (143TD1DN)
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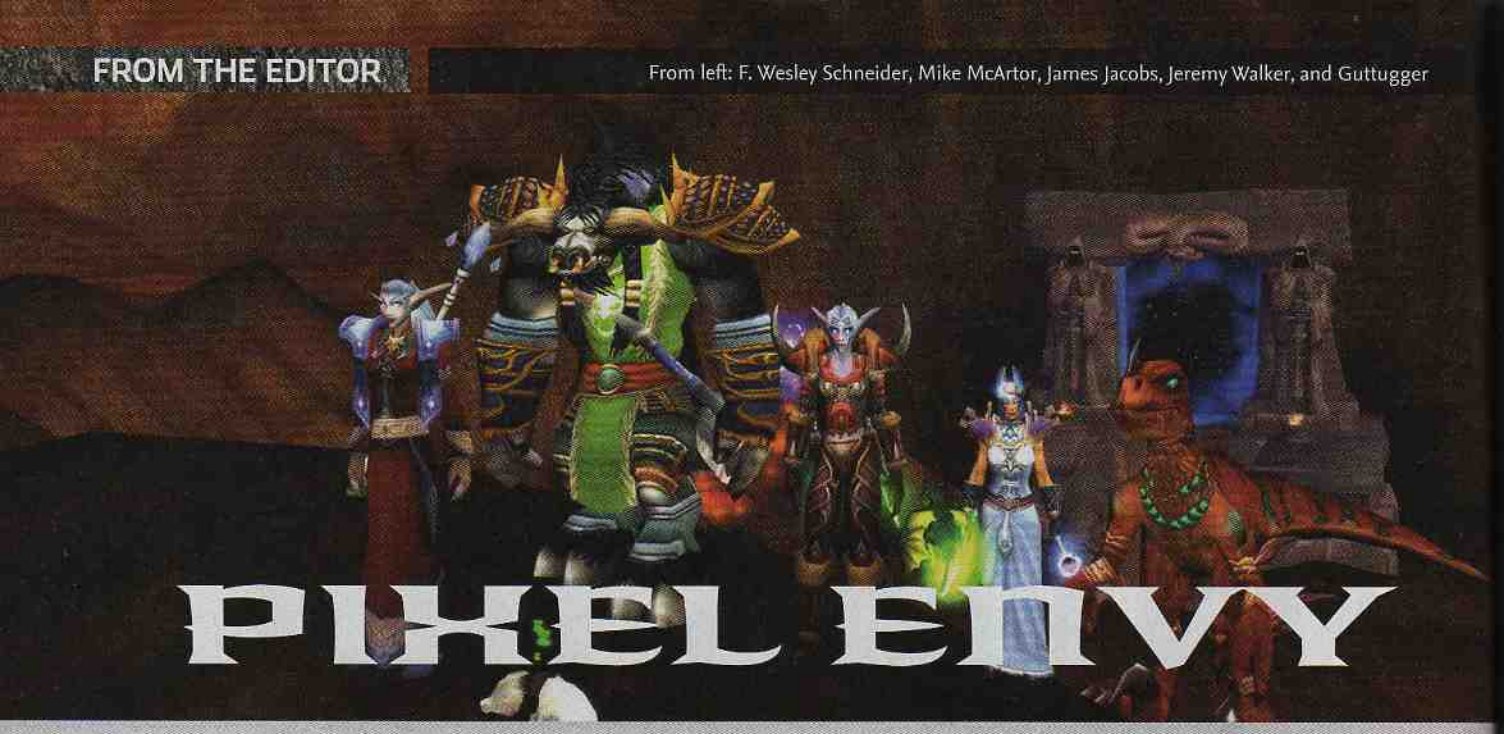


From left: F. Wesley Schneider, Mike McArtor, James Jacobs, Jeremy Walker, and Guttugger

PIXEL ENVY

Video games have come a long way since a little 3/4-full yellow circle floated through endless mazes, desperately seeking the nourishment of tiny dots while avoiding the wrath of four ravenous ghosts. As they've evolved into the multi-billion dollar business they are today, I've seen video games increasingly expanding into the roleplaying game arena. The latest 800-pound gorilla in the room is, of course, *World of Warcraft*. This game has captured more than half of the editorial department at Paizo, and as the release date for the first expansion draws near, we're getting pretty anxious, perching on the crater's edge, peering down at the Dark Portal, and counting the hours until it opens. And we're not the only ones to have succumbed to this lure—*World of Warcraft* has become astoundingly popular, to the extent that the number of people playing this game now eclipses the population of many real-world countries.

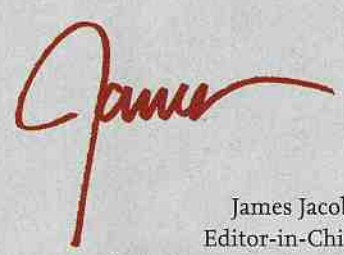
So, what does that mean for our hobby? Are video games really stealing away tabletop roleplayers? What can be done to combat this remorseless electronic predator? Threads with titles like, "Warcraft stole my gaming group" are common sights on RPG messageboards, and even in my own games, it's sometimes hard to get my players to focus on the dice when they're chatting about their latest escapades in Azeroth. Video games certainly do seem threatening to the hobby. They've got an edge when it comes to visual presentation, and with massive multiplayer games like *World of Warcraft* and *D&D Online*, they're getting pretty close to capturing the social interactivity elements as well.

But don't start panicking yet, because the End Times are a long way off. There are still a few things that tabletop games do that videogames can't. The greatest advantage is, of course, that a tabletop game is infinitely more adaptable and customizable than a video game. A DM can roll with unexpected player choices quickly, allowing the game to continue in unexpected directions when the players decide that they'd rather go explore the haunted forest than continue on with the urban-based campaign they've been playing. The act of creating games is easier as well—it takes just one DM to build an adventure, and the sky's the limit as to what you can put in there. You don't need a multi-million-dollar budget and a staff of programmers and artists. Games like *Neverwinter Nights 2* are dabbling in this realm, providing end-users with powerful tools to build and script their own games, but these still require knowledge of scripting, and Wee Jas help you if you decide you want your adventure to take place in an environment that isn't supported by the game's available tilesets, or to focus on a monster that hasn't been built into the game.

And in the meantime, there's plenty we can learn from video games. Just as you can draw inspiration for an assault on an abandoned military complex in your game by watching a movie like *Aliens*, or for a long sea voyage by reading a novel like *Moby Dick*, you can do the same with video games. What's more, we can learn from their triumphs and mistakes in actual game design.

To tell the truth, there's room in the gaming industry for everyone. *Warcraft's* partially the reason I'm here writing this editorial today, after all. Designing the D&D version of *World of Warcraft* was my first freelance job for Wizards of the Coast, and despite the fact that they decided to move away from licensed RPG products before it saw print, it was still the proverbial "foot in the door" for me. And while I'm really close to finally getting a full set of beastmaster armor for my night elf hunter, Shensen, I'll still be back here in the big chair at *DUNGEON* next issue. There's time for both!

Sleeping's overrated anyway.



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Tell us what you think of this issue.

Write to: Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200 or send an email to dungeon@paizo.com.

Check out the *Dungeon* messageboards at paizo.com/dungeon

DUNGEON #140

BRAVE THE NEW ADVENTURE PATH!
THE SAVAGE TIDE RISES
DUNGEON
DEFEAT THE DIABOLICAL DENIZENS OF HELLFIRE MOUNTAIN!
SAVAGE TIDE
INVASION OF THE FROG-MEN
CANNIBAL PIRATES • BULLYWUGS • A NASTY PIT FIEND
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

Dungeon #140 gave us an excuse to put a devil on our cover. Although Mephistopheles isn't scheduled to make a personal appearance in Dave Olson's "Heart of Hellfire Mountain," I should point out that it's a relatively minor change to Copperbelt's spell selection to have him prepare *gate*. What are NPC XP points for, if not for using as spell components to call up some high CR help?

In "The Fall of Graymalkin Academy," Mark A. Hart sent us into a magic school under siege from the Underdark. You can blame us for forgetting to indicate how many shadows his tapestry of midnight allows its user to control, by the way. (The answer is six.)

Finally, this issue held the second installment of our new Adventure Path. Nicolas Logue got the honors for figuring out just what a savage tide really was, and scratched his itch to throw some violent stiltwalkers into the magazine at the same time. "The Bullywug Gambit" also marks the last adventure in the path before the PCs set out for the Isle of Dread. Hope your PCs didn't forget anything important at home!

Back issues of *Dungeon* #140 are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

Kyuss Invades Neverwinter!

Being an incredibly large fan of D&D, I had an idea that I wanted to share with you. It would be both great and profitable if Paizo hired *Neverwinter Nights* 2 scripters (or partnered with the makers of the game) to adapt the adventure paths as modules for the game.

Bioware was regularly publishing similar stand-alone modules that were downloadable for USD 8-10.

What do you think about this? Would Paizo be interested in this?

Gabor Dan
Via Email

While I agree that the concept of creating Adventure Path modules for Neverwinter Nights 2 *sounds great, I'm afraid that it wouldn't be profitable for Paizo to head up such a project, especially since we wouldn't be able to charge money for the downloads. Fortunately, the great thing about the* Neverwnter Nights 2 *toolset is that you don't need to be a huge company to build excellent adventures for it. It sounds like a good job for a computer-savvy gamer with a couple of years of free time!*

Errata Happens

You have probably already heard about this, here's my two cents worth!

Today, I received my copy of *Dungeon* # 140, which contains an adventure entitled "Heart of Hellfire Mountain." What happen to map location #7 (armory) and #8 (inferno forge)? These locations are indicated in the adventure text, but are not marked on the maps on page 73. Will the online supplement for *Dungeon* #140 provide these marked locations? It defeats the purpose of running the adventure if not all of the mapped locations are listed.

In addition, map location #12 in "The Fall of Graymalkin Academy," was not marked on the Graymalkin Academy Top Floor map on page 53.

I am going to presume you have heard these complaints or rants before, but come on! These errors shouldn't be happening. I understand a few typos, no problem, but when it involves maps without the correct markings (or no markings at all), it hurts the game.

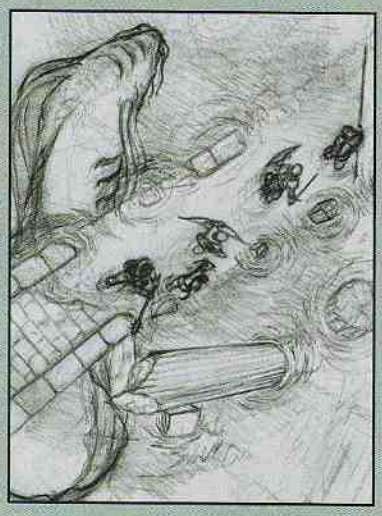
Please, please, please double or triple check the work on the maps, they are very crucial to the game.

Al, a *Dungeon* reader
Via Email

Believe it or not, we do far more than triple-check the maps that go into Dungeon, *and the fact that these errors crept into the issue anyway frustrates us as much (if not more) than you. Unfotunately, at the breakneck production pace the magazine lives on (especially for poor issue #140, which had about a week stolen from its schedule by Gen Con), errors will appear in the magazine now and then.*

For the map in "Hellfire Mountain," area 7 is the 50-foot-by-150-foot room labeled "area 6" just east of area 4, and area 8 is the 100-foot-by-200-foot rectangular room in the southeastcorner of the main complex. Addi-

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON



THE MUSTER OF MORACH TOR

BY RUSSEL BROWN

Deep in the Evermoors a plan to conquer the town of Nesmé is forming, and the only person who can warn the town is about to be sacrificed to a slimy god. Can the PCs rescue the missing officer in time to save Nesmé? A FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for 4th-level characters.

THE LIGHTLESS DEPTHS

BY F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER AND JAMES LAFOND SUTTER

Ages ago, before the first savage tide struck the Isle of Dread, the ancient Olmans waged war against the aboleth city of Golismorga. When the PCs journey deep under the isle to find the source of the *shadow pearls*, they discover horrors almost beyond imagining in a haunted underground city perched on sanity's razored edge. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 11th-level characters.

DIPLOMACY

BY CHRISTOPHER WISSEL

Matched against some of the most powerful, cunning, and ruthless races from across the planes in a battle of wits, it's the PCs' task to ensure that the wealth of ages does not fall into the wrong hands. But beware, for cunning wordplay is not the only way to win a debate. A D&D adventure for 18th-level characters.

tionally, there should be a set of double doors allowing access from area 13 into the nearby area 3. "Graymalkin's" missing area 12 is the set of double doors just north of area 16.

Corrected maps for these adventure should be available online as issue #140's map supplement by the time you read this.

Dungeons & Devils

The cover of DUNGEON #140 really disappoints me. I know I'll be mocked and derided by a certain portion of the roleplaying community for this opinion, but I don't care.

I think your selection of the archetypal "devil" for DUNGEON's cover image does nothing but harm the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS hobby as it continues to struggle for acceptance in mainstream society.

This is just the kind of image that religious fundamentalists seize upon to say that this hobby is Satan's work.

I'm a Christian who plays D&D. I go to church every week and attend Bible studies. To me, D&D doesn't conflict with my faith because I understand that it's just a game. I know that the adventurers are good and they strive to make the world a better place.

Still, this cover will only cause trouble in my house. My wife, who is also a Christian, does not like D&D because of its elements of magic and the supernatural. I do my best to defend the hobby—explaining the merits of it and the enjoyment I find in the game—but this image is sure to upset her.

I think a more logical choice for your cover would be to have Mephistopheles engaged by some adventurers, to have him viewed from afar, or to simply highlight some other adventure on your cover. What I wouldn't have done was use my cover to portray such a figure as a confident, muscular, and handsome character.

Of course, you know what sells to your readers better than I, and it is them whom you must entice.

If I weren't a subscriber, this issue would have stayed on the rack at my gaming store and I would have spent my $7.99 on something else. Since I'm stuck with it, I'll simply be cutting the image off the cover.

Despite this criticism, I wish you the best of luck with your publication and look forward to more adventures in the coming months.

John Simcoe
Via Email

While I understand your disapointment with our choice for cover material, I'm afraid that I disagree that it harms D&D's image. Demonic and devilish imagery have become mainstream for the gaming industry. If anything, using an iconic and recognizable devil for a cover can only boost our mainstream awareness.

Catering to religious fundamentalist concerns and avoiding demonic or diabolic imagery is not the answer. Demons and devils have been an integral part of the game since its foundation, and 2nd-edition's attempts to sanitize this facet by first ignoring the presence of the game's greatest villians and then renaming them was a lowpoint in the game's evolution and popularity. It makes no sense to spend so much effort on pleasing your detractors, since, to be blunt, the game's not for them, and efforts to placate them can only estrange your actual fans and customer base.

DUNGEON has, over the past three years, featured numerous demon lords in portrait-style covers. With this issue, it seemed a logical choice to extend that theme to the other side of the lower planes and give good old Meph a chance to strut his stuff. Picturing him in combat with a group of PCs would not uphold this tradition.

Thanks for Noticing!

You need to send your art folks to a conference, convention, or something, because they are repeating themselves. The same party members have been showing up since DUNGEON #114. The spotty chick with the horns and the tail was novel for a while, but how about something new?

Jared Dahl
Burnsville, MN

Using the same adventurers is actually our intent. By focusing on iconic heroes, we can not only give the magazine a stronger sense of personality and familiarity, but it saves us loads of time in the art ordering process. It's much easier to ask an artist (who might not know anything about D&D's rules) to use established characters as references rather

THIS MONTH IN DRAGON

THE WORLD OF CHINA MIÉVILLE

BY WOLFGANG BAUR

Explore the intriguing and fantastical world of China Miéville with an interview with the author himself and in-depth D&D conversions pulled right from the pages of *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar*, and *The Iron Council*.

BAS-LAG GAZETTEER

Travel from the city-state of New Crobuzon to the mysterious lands of High Cromlech, from the ship-city of Armada to the deadly Gengris in this expansive gazetteer.

THE PEOPLE OF BAS-LAG

Four new player races, including the cactacae, khepri, vodyanoi, and the tortured remade.

MONSTERS OF NEW CROBUZON

From the deadly slake moth to the incomprehensible weaver, this bestiary details eight menacing monsters of Bas-Lag.

PLUS!

The Ecology of the Yrthak, Volo's Guide, Dragonmarks, Class Acts, First Watch, Savage Tidings, comics—including the Order of the Stick—and more!

than explain all the nuances about what character class types can't wear armor.

That said, with issue #139 we did indeed introduce four new adventurers to the DUNGEON *family—a dwarven barbarian, an elven druid with a dinosaur animal companion, a human monk, and a human wizard.*

Savage Tide Overload?

I've just finished reading the first installment of the Savage Tide Adventure Path and found it an interesting adventure. It brought back memories of my first D&D game session, in wich I played a ranger and we went against a guild of thieves in a backwater village (straight from the DM's imagination, since then we only had the core 2nd-edition books), so great work! I also read the article about Sasserine, and I'm wondering if you are planning on releasing a pdf file as you did with Age of Worms that includes background material and conversion data to bring the adventure to the FORGOTTEN REALMS or EBERRON?

João Almeida
Lisbon, Portugal

Available for free download now at paizo.com is the Savage Tide Player's Guide, a gazeteer of the city of Sasserine that includes new feats, a map of the city (including a key to hundreds of minor locations like shrines and shops and taverns), and details to help new players familiarize themselves with their new home (or to inspire DMs with adventure hooks).

We got off to a slow start with the FORGOTTEN REALMS *and* EBERRON *conversions for Savage Tide, but we should be close to caught up by the time you read this issue.*

LFG Savage Tide

I have been a DM for about fifteen years, so there are a lot of reasons why I love DUNGEON so much. One of them would be the fantastic artwork that has become a benchmark for fantasy publications. Next would be the exceptional level at which the adventures are written. The thing I like the most, however, is that the articles/adventures run uninterrupted from start to finish. My only problem at the moment is finding the time and people to play with!

It's only been about six months since I went out and bought the 3.5 core rule books, and I'm been amazed at how good they are. It's this new edition that got me back into the game. The improvements in the rules made it easier than ever to open up the pages of DUNGEON and get right into playing. For those of us with time constraints, this is a godsend. I love spending a few hours on the weekend just leafing through any DUNGEON magazine and "mining" it for ideas, names, maps, and other useful material. Keep up the high standard. I missed out on Age of Worms, but I'm almost salivating in anticipation of Savage Tide!

Many of the other letters I have read in Prison Mail recently request additions to the magazine or changes to the adventure information. It must be hard work to try and keep everyone happy. While I understand that different people have different requirements, I must say that I like things as they are; just keep writing top quality adventures. My only small criticism would be the overuse of isometric maps. While they look great, they can be confusing and most map info can be conveyed with a "top down" view.

Lastly, I'm of the opinion that D&D, played as it should be, in a social environment with friends, with pen and paper, will always have a dynamism far superior to computer games. That's due to the quality of material produced by you guys at Paizo and Wizards of the Coast. Thanks for supporting and maintaining my favorite hobby! Game on.

Dave Ewings
Air Force base, Richmond, Australia

I wouldn't be a good team player if I didn't take the time to point out that you can still buy all the back issues for Age of Worms at paizo.com. You'll be wanting issues #124–#135.

Now that that's over with, thanks for the kind words! It's always good to hear that DUNGEON*'s doing its primary job of helping DMs with time-constraints run their games.*

It is indeed tough to make everyone happy all of the time. DUNGEON*'s come a long way over the past several years, but I think that where we're at now is the best it's ever been. That's not to say we're not constantly looking at ways to even further improve the magazine, but the format seems to be working close to perfectly as it is.*

And as for that last comment, well, I kinda ran out of room. Check out my editorial in this issue for my take on it.—James Jacobs

RIDING THE RAIL

BY CHRISTOPHER WISSEL
BY UDON
BY ROB LAZZARETTI

EBERRON, LOW LEVEL (1ST–5TH), LIGHTNING RAIL

On a lightning rail coach hurtling through the Brelish countryside, a highly-trained criminal strike force attempts a daring heist of a massive monolith from the continent of Xen'drik. Can the unsuspecting PCs overcome their surprise in time to repulse the invaders from the inside, or will they finish their journey in chains?

"Riding the Rail" is an EBERRON adventure suitable for a group of four 5th–level characters. The entire adventure is set on a moving coach, and the hectic pace offers little opportunity to regain hit points or spells through rest.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Xen'drik is a continent filled with mysterious ruins that hold clues to 40,000 years of lost civilization. Now that the Last War is over, the economic resources of the lost continent are finally being exploited. Sages, scholars, and merchant houses race to be the first to reap the rewards of the new industry: archeology. Adventurers, once thought of as deserters and warmongers, are now the most valuable resource in discovering and commercializing the powerful secrets of this lost world.

In the wake of this fervor, black markets thrive. Thieves and unscrupulous merchants come out to make a quick fortune in any way possible. One of the largest of these black markets is run by a powerful cartel called the Pilfered Wand. Specializing in ancient relics, these rogues and assassins are hired primarily by those who seek to use Xen'drik's secrets for darker purposes, away from public view.

Recently, a massive stone column has been brought back from the mysterious continent at great expense. Carved from a single piece of granite, the rectangular column is 100 feet long and embedded with strange runes and arcane symbols. It was purchased by House Lyrandar, which believes that the symbols are related to powerful weather control magic, and arrangements have been made for its shipment to Aundair via lightning rail. Unfortunately for them, spies for the Pilfered Wand in Sharn have also taken note of the transaction, and have concocted an elaborate caper to steal the stone column for themselves.

Several thieves have come aboard disguised as wait staff, coach guards, and luxury cart passengers. Their plan is to take over the coach and charm the bound elemental, while a second group leaps aboard and sets up a beacon on the roof to signal a rail switch-over in the Brelish wilderness. If all goes well, the hijacked coach is diverted to a secluded box canyon a few miles to the north, where the column is unloaded and the passengers are sold as slaves.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are riding the same lightning rail that carries the Xen'drik column, outbound from Sharn and heading into inner Khorvaire, when they find themselves ambushed by armed thugs. The PCs must overcome the thieves and make their way to the crew cart, where they find the coach under the control of a Pilfered Wand artificer.

From there, they learn that a track switch-over has already been signaled, and that the method for stopping the coach lies with Vikari, the gang's deadly leader. Fighting their way to the roof, the PCs must overcome the guards, take out the signal beacon, and stop the coach.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure assumes that the PCs are already aboard the coach from Sharn, but this adventure can take place between any two points that are connected by lightning rail. If the PCs require motivation to use the coach, here are a few easy hooks:

- A PC comes across an Aundairian item that requires regional arcane knowledge to identify. A Morgrave University scholar shows great interest in the item, and is willing to front the travel costs to send them to Arcanix. Magewright classes at the floating academies are currently between sessions for the next week, a time where the public is traditionally allowed greater access to the libraries within.
- In a surprise move, Jaela Daran, Keeper of the Flame in Thrane, sent out an open call for new architects to design a cluster of buildings in Flamekeep. The normally closed economy is taking outside bids, but the working models have to be presented to the Council of cardinals within 5 days. Perhaps by design, this disqualifies most who live outside Thrane. Undaunted, a bold architecture guild in Sharn wishes to participate, but they require time to craft a model. They wish to send the PCs to the presentation, and then use *scrying* to teleport the finished product to the Council's chambers before the deadline passes.

THE LIGHTNING RAIL

Over the years since its invention, both passenger carts and heavy cargo have been conveniently transported along the rail lines that connect much of the Five Nations. Coaches safely move at 30 miles per hour, and the cost to carry a common-class passenger is 5 sp/mile.

Generally, lightning rail coaches include ten carts, but this coach has been pared down due to the bulk of the Xen'drik column. The PCs travel in a coach with only 9 carts, which consist of the crew cart pulling the coach, two supply boxcars, two connected flatbeds, a common-class passenger cart, a luxury cart, a dining cart, and a caboose bearing House Orien supplies. The PCs' tickets place them in the common passenger cart, and also give them access to the dining cart. If they inquire about luxury tickets, they learn that the seats are full.

The lightning rail works on a few basic principles. First, the lines of transport are made from glowing magical devices called *conductor stones*, which repel each other at close distances and serve as the

coach's track. The bottom of each of the carts is also embedded with the stones, causing the entire transport to float frictionless a few feet above the ground.

The crew cart of the coach is bound with a powerful air elemental that serves to propel the vehicle along the path. Controlled by a dragonmarked item called *lightning reins*, the elemental can be compelled to slow down or speed up at will. These items are specifically attuned to dragonmarked members of House Orien, and cannot be used by anyone else, though the elemental may still be controlled by other magical means such as *charm monster*, *dominate monster*, and commands from clerics with the Air domain, so long as the caster is touching the binding dragonshard. Additionally, in the absence of magical alternatives, merely ordering or asking the elemental to perform a given action may succeed if the speaker makes a Diplomacy or Intimidate check to make the elemental helpful.

Maintaining overall stability requires that each cart be relatively uniform in shape and size. The interiors are approximately 25 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 15 feet high. Each cart is connected by a 5-foot-square mithral section bound by a stout pin and heavy chains of the same material. Detaching a cart takes 3 rounds, with the first two spent disconnecting the chains (an automatic success). On the third round, a DC 20 Strength check is needed to pull the pin between the carts. If successful, the detached portion decelerates at 10 feet per round until stopped. All windows in the passenger cars are made from glass, while any in the cargo compartments are left open.

SETTLING IN

The PCs are placed in the common passenger cart, located in area 1. While boarding the coach in Sharn's Gateway district, the PCs undoubtedly notice the massive column, dangling by a system of magical pulleys and directed by the strength of flesh golems. If they decide to investigate prior to departure, they can determine that the item radiates strong conjuration and transmutation magic.

The column is big news on the coach, and any PCs who remain curious can make a DC 10 Gather Information check to learn about its buyers, its destination, and the rumors surrounding its function.

All common passenger tickets have access to the dining cart in area 2. The rear door leading to area 6 is locked with an *arcane lock* spell (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 28) for the protection of the passengers.

1. PASSENGER CART (EL 6)

The passenger cart is made up of benches separated by an aisle. Sets of sleeping bunks line the storage areas above the seats, and a small chest sits at the foot of each bunk for storing personal items.

In addition to the PCs, there are 12 other passengers in the common cart. Eight of them are 1st-level commoners, and four are 1st-level experts. None on them become combatants during the voyage, and unless the PCs question them, they keep to themselves.

Just before dawn on the first night of travel, the Pilfered Wand attacks. Any PCs who are awake notice as the door to area 2 opens and three Medium gray swirling mists are forced into the cart by a humanoid. He is followed by two horned thugs bearing several lengths of silken rope.

Creatures: Reafrin Sesliel is the newest member of the Pilfered Wand, leaving his yuan-ti cell in search of advancement. He overstated his abilities to get the job, passing himself off as a handler of strange and exotic animals. Secretly, his control is nonexistent. He is nervous and sweats profusely during his duties, hiding his fear behind overblown bravado.

The yuan-ti and the tiefling thugs herd the living spells over their victims, incapacitating them without undue fuss. They then move about the cart, tying up sleeping passengers and subduing or killing all who resist.

Sleeping PCs require a DC 10 Listen check to awaken, otherwise the PC

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closest to the front of the passenger cart wakes to find himself attacked by a living spell.

Reafrin Sesliel, male yuan-ti pureblood: 18 hp; *Monster Manual* 263.

Tiefling Thugs (2): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 209.

SICKENING SLEEP (3) **CR 2**
N Medium ooze
Monster Manual III 94
Init –1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot –1
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10
hp 5 (1 HD); **DR** 10/magic
SR 11
Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0
Spd 20 ft.
Melee slam +0 (1d4 plus enfeeblement and sleep)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +0
Atk Options engulf
Abilities Str 11, Dex 8, Con 11, Int —, Wis 8, Cha 11
SQ enfeeblement, sleep, ooze traits
Engulf (Ex) A sickening sleep can flow around creatures that fit within its space as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. A sickening sleep merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against a sickening sleep, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 11 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the enfeeblement and sleep effects and are considered grappled.
Enfeeblement (Su) A creature hit by a sickening sleep's slam attack or engulfed by it takes a 1d6 penalty to Strength for 1 minute. Multiple hits are not cumulative, and the subject's Strength score cannot drop below 1.
Sleep (Su) A creature hit by a sickening sleep's slam attack or engulfed by it falls asleep for 1 minute (Will DC 11 negates)

Tactics: If met with armed resistance, the two thugs immediately attack. Reafrin uses *darkness* against PCs, hoping to get them to stumble into the living spells, which always attack the nearest moving creature.

Development: If both thugs are incapacitated and Reafrin is wounded, he surrenders and attempts to stall the PCs as long as he can.

2. THE DINING AREA (EL 3)

This room is decorated like a dimly lit hunting lodge. Everburning torches line all areas and the heads of various horned beasts stare down from the walls. The bar is made from fine oak, and leads to a fully stocked kitchen. A number of bamboo poles are littered about the area, along with several half-finished bamboo cages lashed with leather cord.

Creatures: Six tiefling thugs are in the room, charged with setting up the portable slave cages meant to transport the passengers once they reach their destination.

Tiefling Thugs (6): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 209.

Tactics: Two 5-foot-square tables have been overturned, and if the room is invaded, the thugs use them as cover. They maintain their position, hoping to force their opponents into the kitchen in area 3. If four of them are killed, the rest surrender.

3. GALLEY (EL 5)

This kitchen is tightly packed with supplies, including barrels of ale, foodstuffs, and a small freezer. There are a few latched cupboards filled with china, and glassware hangs from the ceiling.

Creatures: Tril, like his sister Mish in area 4, is a high-ranking member of the Pilfered Wand. He's currently dressed as a waiter, having infiltrated the crew in order to facilitate the attack. If he hears a commotion in area 2, he hides and waits. When he hears PCs enter the room, he bursts from hiding and blubbers for help, using his Bluff and Disguise skills to appear as a terrified waiter. If the PCs accept his guise, he refuses to be left behind, and plays the victim until they encounter Mish, at which point he stabs the most vulnerable PC in the back with his poisoned dagger and joins the fray.

TRIL **CR 5**
Male changeling rogue 5
NE Medium humanoid
EBERRON Campaign Setting 12
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +1
Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Orc
AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; uncanny dodge
hp 20 (5 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2 (+4 vs. sleep and charm); evasion
Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 dagger +6 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)
Ranged +1 dagger +6 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +3d6
Special actions minor change shape
Combat Gear *potion of delay poison*, antitoxin (3 doses), oil of taggit (5 doses, injested DC 15, 0/unconsciousness), giant wasp poison (3 doses, injury DC 18, 1d6 Dex/1d6/Dex), sassone leaf residue (1 dose, contact DC 16, 2d12 hp/1d6 Con)
Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +9, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +11 (+13 acting), Gather Information +11, Intimidate +15, Listen +9, Search +9, Sense Motive +6
Possessions combat gear, *+1 dagger* smeared with giant wasp poison, waiter's uniform
Minor Change Shape (Su) Changelings can alter their appearances as though using a *disguise self* spell that affects their bodies but not their possessions. This ability is not an illusory effect, but a minor physical alteration of facial features, skin color and texture, and size, within the limits described for the spell. They can use this ability at will, and the alteration lasts until they change shape again. Changelings revert to their natural forms when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals their natural form. When using this ability to create a disguise, changelings receive a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. Using this ability is a move action.

4. LUXURY CART (EL 5)

This cart resembles a richly appointed sitting room. Various flowering plants lighten the atmosphere, and chandeliers hang from the ceiling to shed comfortable reading light. The walls are lined with bookshelves filled with old tomes and editions of the *Korranberg Chronicle*.

There are four sets of stairs here, each next to a thick silk rope. These lead to extra-dimensional spaces courtesy of permanent *rope trick* spells, and each 10-foot-by-20-foot space serves as a posh private cabin, complete with a bed, two dressers, a large mirror, and an armoire.

Creatures: Three of these spaces contain first class passengers, trussed up and sleeping soundly. The northeast corner, however, contains Tril's sister Mish, as well as three thugs actively engaged in rifling through the passengers' baggage.

MISH **CR 5**
Female changeling rogue 5
NE Medium humanoid
EBERRON Campaign Setting 12
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +9
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; uncanny dodge
hp 25 (5 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2 (+4 vs. sleep and charm); evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +8 (1d6+2/18–20)
Ranged dagger +6 (1d4+2/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options sneak attack +3d6
Special actions minor change shape
Combat Gear *potion of spider climb*, *potion of invisibility*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)
Skills Bluff +10, Disguise +8 (+10 to act in character), Hide +11, Intimidate +12, Listen +9, Tumble +11, Spot +9
Possessions combat gear, *+1 studded leather armor*, masterwork rapier, 2 daggers, *cloak of elvenkind*

Minor Change Shape (Su) Changelings can alter their appearances as though using a *disguise self* spell that affects their bodies but not their possessions. This ability is not an illusory effect, but a minor physical alteration of facial features, skin color and texture, and size, within the limits described for the spell. They can use this ability at will, and the alteration lasts until they change shape again. Changelings revert to their natural forms when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals their natural form. When using this ability to create a disguise, changelings receive a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. Using this ability is a move action.

Tiefling Thugs (3): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 209

Tactics: Mish can see out of the extradimensional space, and she and the thugs attempt surprise attacks as soon as any PCs open the *rope trick*. They can also observe any PC preparations and use the furniture inside as cover. If the PCs pass by the *rope trick* spells without investigating, Mish takes two of the thugs and retreats to the rear areas in search of surviving thieves to assist her in surprising the party from behind.

5. CREW CART (EL 7)

The back third of the crew cart is filled with cargo, leaving a shadowy five-foot-wide corridor. The front section opens up into the helm, with several steps that lead to a circular dais. A set of leather reins hangs from a panel covered in maps and gauges, and streaks of electrical energy dash against the windows. The entire cart gives off a faint humming noise.

Creatures: Most of the loyal members of the House Orien crew are dead. Their bodies are stacked in the corner, still warm from the recent slaughter. Notably missing is the pilot, who was thrown from the train by the insurgents in the first few moments of the assault. In front of the helm stands an artificer of the Pilfered Wand, a human named Gendry. His unwashed forehead is a rash of dirty pimples half-hidden by a grimy feathered hat, but beneath it his eyes are clear and sharp. At his side are two rusty mechanical construct homunculi known

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THE ROOF

Currently, the coach moves at 25 miles per hour, affecting all characters on the roof as if in a strong wind. Ranged attacks are made at a –2 penalty, and Tiny or smaller creatures must make a DC 10 Fortitude save each round or be knocked prone by the force. Climbing on the side of any cart requires a DC 10 Climb check, unless otherwise noted.

Falling from the coach's roof is treated as a normal 10-foot fall, except that it deals 2d6 points of damage due to the coach's horizontal velocity. As with any other fall, a DC 15 Jump check reduces the damage by 1d6 points, as does a DC 15 Tumble check. A person who jumps intentionally from a lightning rail cart and succeeds on both these checks takes no damage.

As long as the coach is of sufficient length, it's possible for a character to fall off of a front cart, regain his feet, and then grab onto a rear cart. Characters wishing to do so must take a move action to travel at least 20 feet in the same direction as the lightning rail, then succeed on a DC 15 Climb check and take another move action to get back on one of the cart's outer walkways. A low platform at the back of the caboose reduces the Climb check to DC 5. Creative PCs may find other ways to reboard, using grappling hooks, summoned mounts, and other magic at your discretion.

as iron defenders. Though normally fashioned to look like demonic hounds, Gendry built his to resemble spiders with arcing scorpion tails.

Gendry joined the Pilfered Wand to learn more about artifacts, hoping to one day construct some of his own in the Xen'drik style. He masterminded the plan to steal the column in the first place, and by the time the PCs arrive has already gained control of the bound elemental through the use of a scroll of *charm monster*. Gendry cannot order the elemental to leave its post, but as long as he lives, the PCs will find it difficult, at best, to coax the elemental away from its breakneck speed.

GENDRY **CR 7**

Male human artificer 7
CE Medium humanoid
EBERRON Campaign Setting 29
Init +1; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Gnome, Infernal

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15
hp 45 (7 HD) (normally 34); **DR** 10/magic (ranged attacks)
Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Spd 20 ft.
Melee light mace +6 (1d6)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Atk Options metamagic spell trigger (Maximize/Quicken)
Special Actions disable trap, item creation, craft homunculus, retain essence
Combat Gear scroll of *bear's endurance**, scroll of *charm monster*, scroll of *displacement*, scroll of *fireball* (5d6), scroll of *protection from arrows**, scroll of *vampiric touch**, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (20 charges), *wand of magic missile* (CL 5, 30 charges), *wand of scorching ray* (24 charges)
*Already used.

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16
SQ artificer knowledge, artisan bonus, infusions
Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Finesse
Skills Concentration +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Search +12 (+14 secret doors), Spellcraft +14, Use Magic Device +16 (+18 with artisan bonus, +20 with scrolls)
Possessions combat gear, masterwork breastplate, light mace

Infusions (Sp) Gendry has recently used *stone construct*, *lesser weapon augmentation*, and *shield of faith* on each of the spider defenders. The effects are already reflected in the stat blocks, and should be treated in all respects as spells cast by a 7th-level caster. Combined with the infusions he used to kill the guards, he has none remaining for the day. For more information on infusions, see the *EBERRON Campaign Setting* 31.

Metamagic Spell-Trigger (Su) Gendry can apply any feats that he knows to charged items, using extra charges to gain their benefits. Applying Maximize to the use of any charged item drains 3 additional charges, and applying Quicken drains 4 additional charges.

SPIDER DEFENDER (2) **CR 1**

CE Small construct
EBERRON Campaign Setting 287
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 18
hp 21 (2 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine (up to 70 hp)
Immune construct traits
Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +5 (1d6+3 plus 1d6 frost)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** –1

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con —, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 7
Feats weapon focus (bite)
Skills Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2

Further information on the artificer base class is available in the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*, page 29. If you do not have access to this, treat Gendry as a 7th-level wizard.

Tactics: In overcoming the coach, Gendry has already cast *bear's endurance* and used a scroll of *vampiric touch* to incapacitate the pilot before flinging him from the coach.

The spider defenders try to keep themselves between Gendry and the PCs while he blasts the party with his wands, liberally using up charges with his metamagic spell-trigger ability. He is jealous of wizards, and often attacks them first. He fights until reduced to 10 hp and then surrenders, assuming that the PCs will not risk killing someone of his importance.

Development: If Gendry dies, the spider defenders crumble to dust. If he is subdued or surrenders, he remains belligerent and rude but offers up what he knows with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check.

Though the PCs may think they've saved the day by defeating Gendry, they still face the problem of controlling the bound elemental, which unless

the PCs interfere, obeys Gendry's last command and maintains its current speed as it hurtles toward the lightning rail spur track activated by the beacon construct in area **9**. The beacon causing the switch-over has set off several alarms, and even if the PCs don't bother questioning Gendry, a casual observation of the various instruments makes it obvious with a DC 10 Search check that something elsewhere on the coach is overriding the normal automated switching mechanisms. Gendry can only control the coach's speed, not its course.

6. GUARDIAN STORAGE CART (EL 5)

Boxes and crates of supplies are loaded to capacity. Dust covers the floor, and the boxes rock gently with the movement of the coach. A number of heavy crates block a sliding iron door on the left side of the cart, and a five-foot-by-five-foot hatch is inset in the boxcar's roof.

Creatures: For a fee, House Orien can ensure extra protection for cargo. On this particular coach, the "protection" is a hieracosphinx named Kreaghak. When Vikari passed through this area with his men, he used a *hold monster* scroll on the creature. The spell has since worn off, and the humiliated monster is furious with any additional intruders. Due to the piles of boxes, this entire cart is considered difficult terrain.

Kreaghak, male hieracosphinx: hp 70; *Monster Manual* 234

Development: A specially built roof hatch at the top of this cart is used by House Orien when they need to subdue the vicious hieracosphinx before unloading. It leads to the roof, and can be reached by climbing onto the crates.

Treasure: Each crate is nailed shut and stamped with a "property of" label, requiring several rounds to get into a stable position to force open (Break DC 13). Most contain personal items of no worth, but one in five contains coins and expensive personal effects. Roll randomly on the level 1 treasure tables on page 52 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details. Repercussions for this thievery are left up to you.

7. STORAGE CART

This area is exactly like area **6**, only there is no guardian or hatch leading to the roof. Only one in ten crates contains anything valuable.

8. THE XEN'DRIK COLUMN (EL 6)

The column lies on its side, ten feet high, forty-five feet wide, and long enough to take up two flatbed carts. Flashes of electrical energy spark from the column's surface and unusual protrusions rise and fall from the stone at random.

Creatures: Two crossbowmen stand on the roof of the caboose and fire shots at PCs making their way across the column. Six more advance with rapiers drawn to either kill the PCs or bull rush them off the column.

Tiefling Thugs (8): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 209.

Traps: The wind speed and electrical energy of the lighting rail has activated six of the runes on the stone, as marked on the map. These runes spark and lash out with bolts of electricity whenever any creature enters one of the activated ten-foot-squares. Treat these runes as traps—they can be disabled with Disable Device, or with a successful *dispel magic* against caster level 10.

Mysterious Runes: CR 2; magical device; location trigger; no reset; spell effect (2d6 electricity, DC 12 Reflex save avoids); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

9. THE CABOOSE (EL 8)

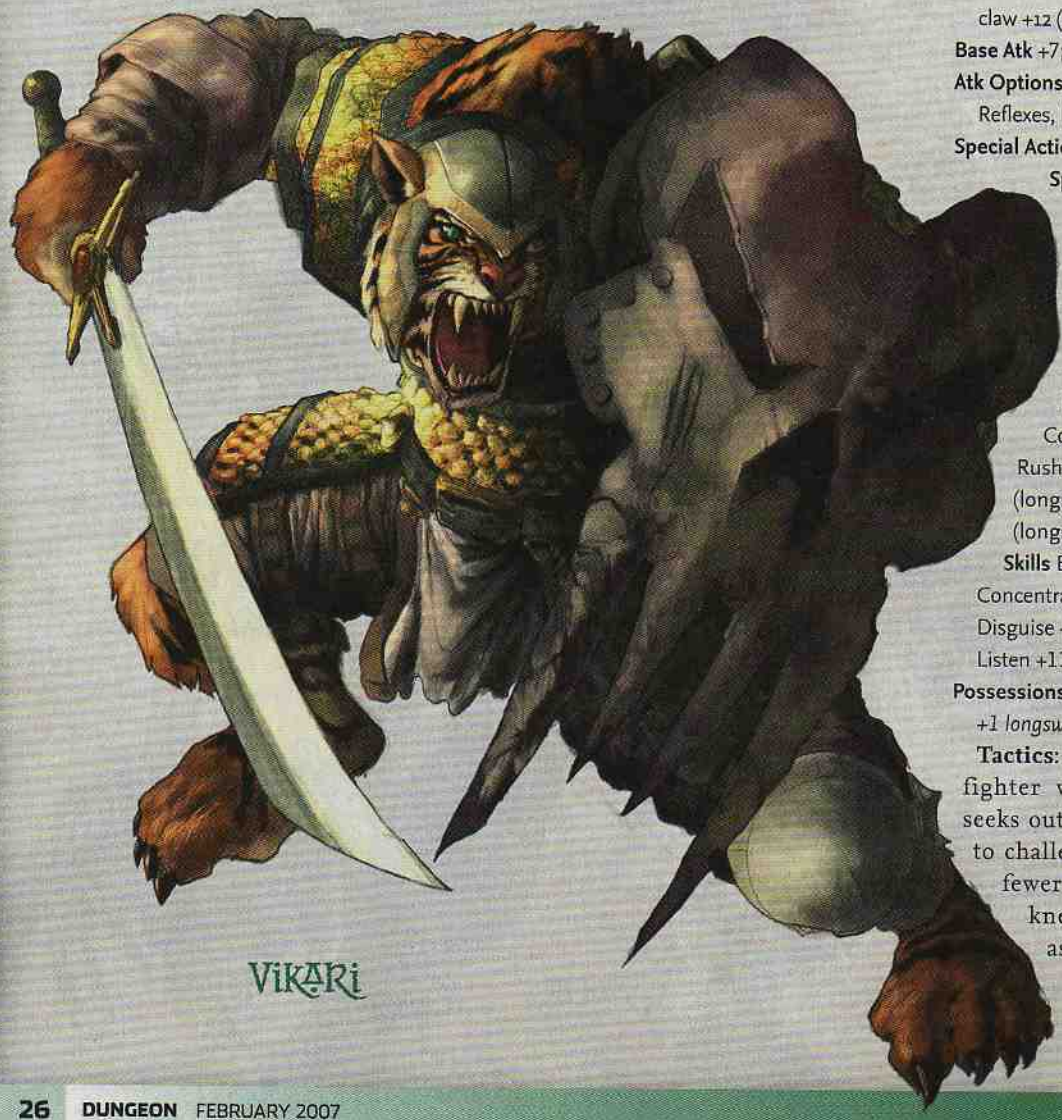
The interior of the caboose is filled with numerous boxes of mundane magewright equipment. Several lengths of rope and a few bulky sacks sit half-opened in the corner.

A railing with numerous handholds surrounds the caboose. Climbing this railing requires a DC 0 Climb check.

Creatures: On the roof, Vikari doesn't assist his thugs, choosing instead to finish his beacon preparations. If it looks like the PCs are going to challenge him directly, he flexes his fingers and takes a few practice swings with his sword. He is secretly pleased that the PCs made it this far, and is happy to be able to dispatch them martially.

Behind him, the construct beacon uses its legs to cling to the roof of the caboose. Designed by Gendry, it loosely resembles a mechanical scorpion with no pinchers. The beacon is tuned to a switching mechanism controlling a rail spur that shunts coaches off to a secluded box canyon, where the bandits hope to finish their task in peace. If the construct is not destroyed or disabled (DC 15 Disable Device check) within 60 minutes of the initial assault, it successfully implements a rail switch, sending the coach further into the wilderness unless the PCs have convinced the air elemental to cease pulling. Though a Large construct with 84 hp and hardness 8, the beacon construct does not attempt to defend itself.

In addition to defeating Vikari and destroying the beacon construct outright, the PCs may also neutralize the situation by detaching the caboose from the rest of the train, using the method described on page 21. In this case, they merely need to hold off Vikari long enough to complete the required actions. Attempting to detach the cart enrages the rakshasa, who concentrates his attacks on the character making the necessary Strength checks. If the players succeed, he abandons the caboose in favor of taking vengeance on the PCs.



VIKARI **CR 8**

Male zakya rakshasa
LE Medium outsider (native)
EBERRON Campaign Setting 297
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +11, Spot +11
Languages Common, Infernal, Undercommon

AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 26
hp 66 (7 HD); **DR** 15/good and piercing
SR 22
Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6
Spd 40 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +14/+9 (1d8+8/19–20) and bite +7 (1d6+2) or
claw +12 (1d4+5) and bite +7 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Special Actions detect thoughts
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th, melee touch +12, ranged touch +9)
3/day—*chill touch* (DC 11), *true strike*, *vampiric touch*

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11
SQ change shape, outsider traits
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)
Skills Bluff +14, Climb +9, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +14, Intimidate +12, Jump +13, Listen +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11
Possessions +1 *scale mail*, heavy steel shield, +1 *longsword*

Tactics: Vikari is a straightforward fighter who relishes combat and seeks out other fighters in the party to challenge directly. If brought to fewer than 5 hp, he drop to his knees and extends his neck, asking that the final blow be swift. If he is not slain, he

snarls insults and attacks with *vampiric touch* until dead.

Development: Among Vikari's personal effects is a note that outlines the sale of the passengers to unnamed agents in Droamm.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs a CR 4 experience award if they successfully prevent the rail switch by destroying the beacon construct or detaching the caboose.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Even if they don't manage to control the bound air elemental powering the coach, PCs who destroy or detach the beacon construct in time avoid switching rails and eventually arrive in their intended destination, where House Orien officials unable to establish communication with the missing pilot are ready to slow the train and prevent a crash. Should the elemental decide to stop out in the wilderness or the beacon not be destroyed before instigating a rail switch, a search team from the rail terminus discovers the coach in a matter of hours, though in the latter case possibly not before Vikari's slaver contacts arrive.

Upon the coach's arrival at its intended destination, House Lyrander agents quickly descend upon the column and arrange for the next phase of its transportation. They casually dismiss accounts of the incident, but listen raptly to any observations made about the column itself.

Any Pilfered Wand prisoners are held for further questioning. Within days, House Orien sends 1,750 gp to the PCs, theoretically in gratitude for their services but with the understanding that the party should keep quiet about the lightning rail's vulnerabilities, lest the house suffer a rash of copycat crimes.

Sharn officials may also contact the PCs regarding the Pilfered Wand's operations in Droamm, perhaps leading to a direct incursion into their base of operations. The leadership of the Pilfered Wand, of course, may plan reprisals of their own.

Christopher Wissel currently lives in Galveston, TX with his wife Jackie and their two cats. His previous efforts include "Wingclipper's Revenge" in issue #132.

Adapting the Adventure

There are several ways to adapt this adventure to a traditional fantasy setting such as Greyhawk or Forgotten Realms. In such an adaptation, the coach could be a recent, somewhat unstable invention of a cantankerous wizard, full of *levitate* and *gust of wind* spells. In this case, the column is just another magical item that powers the coach, and the goal of the Pilfered Wand becomes stealing the coach itself.

Alternatively, you could replace the coach with a river barge recently returning from a successful jungle safari. The carts of the coach become a line of floating rafts that are pushed by a paddleboat in the rear. In this case, the Pilfered Wand hopes to separate the rafts and use a construct to paddle the magical column into a tributary, leaving the out-of-control paddleboat to be threatened by a waterfall.

Gendry's artificer levels can be replaced with wizard levels and his homunculi with imps. The changelings can become doppelgangers, and Vikari may become an ogre mage or an efreeti, if not a simple human rogue.

Scaling the Adventure

"Riding the Rail" is designed for a group of four 5th-level PCs, but with a little work it can be easily adapted for use by 3rd–4th level characters. All NPCs should have their class levels adjusted to reflect changes in average party level.

3rd–4th Level: Remove the *enfeeblement* ability from the living spells in area 1; reduce the number of tiefling thugs in each encounter by 2. Remove the spider defenders, change Vikari from a rakshasa to a greater barghest, and remove Gendry's *wand of scorching ray*.

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

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CURSE YOU PETER JACKSON AND YOUR GREEDY HOBBIT WAYS OF MAKING MORE MONEY!
SO, I TAKE IT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BUY THAT ONE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? OF COURSE I'M GOING TO BUY IT.

Savage Tide

Tides of Dread

The colony of Farshore has survived on its own for years, a secluded and struggling hamlet perched on the western shore of the tiny island of Temute. An island dwarfed by the savage landscape across a narrow channel to the north, a landscape of rugged mountains, tangled jungles, and trackless swamps. This is the Isle of Dread, and its resources and hidden treasures are matched only by its peril. Yet for all these dangers, what may bring doom to Farshore is not an invasion of inhuman monsters from the mainland, but an invasion of all-too-human monsters from across the sea.

"Tides of Dread" is the fifth chapter of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* Magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* Magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #352 of *Dragon* Magazine features rumors of Farshore, a helpful list of improvements the PCs can make to the colony, and other features to help get PCs oriented in their new home on the Isle of Dread.

The PCs should be 9th level when they begin "Tides of Dread." They should gain enough experience to advance to 10th level at some point during the adventure, and 11th level by its end.

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | MID LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | WILDERNESS & MASS BATTLE

PLAYTESTED BY ROB ALFORD, STANLEY CRAMER, DAN DEKKER, APRIL GREER, BEN "HUFFSTER" HUFF, PAUL PHAREZ, TODD ROWE, DAYTON RUFF, BEN WILLIAMS

Switching Sides

If your PCs work for the Lotus Dragons (the thieves' guild they tangled with in the first adventure in this campaign), their patron is Rowyn Kellani, not Lavinia Vanderboren. Already bored with controlling Sasserine's harbor, Rowyn has turned her eyes south to Farshore. If she can seize control of the colony, the rare and exotic imports to the north can only increase the fortunes and influence of the Lotus Dragons.

In this scenario, the PCs still arrive at Farshore to find it under attack by the Rat's End pirates, but when they drive off the pirates they find that Roywn has established herself in a position of power against the Meravanchis. As the PCs prepare for the coming Crimson Fleet assault, they'll need to work with their mistress to ensure that Meravanchi doesn't win control of the colony. Assassination missions are certainly not out of the question.

Without Lavinia in the picture, Vanthus's role in this adventure changes only slightly. He still lusts for Rowyn, even though she has moved on and abandoned him as a bad mistake. His attempt to abduct her at the end of this adventure plays out the same.

Adventure Background

Centuries ago, the Olman Empire spread itself across the length and breadth of the Densac Gulf and as far south as the Pearl Sea. On this southern verge, its most isolated kingdom, Thanaclan, also became its most prosperous. Long after the rest of the Olman Empire succumbed to warfare and strife, the Lords of Thanaclan thrived in their opalescent capital, and their angry gods were pleased. Yet the kingdom of Thanaclan was not destined for immortality. A thousand years ago, a great tragedy threw down the proud kingdom, transforming a prosperous land into what is known today as the Isle of Dread.

For hundreds of years, the Isle of Dread lay in the vast sea, unvisited and unknown save by the few tribes of Olman survivors, who as generations passed looked back upon the age of Thanaclan with growing wonder and fear. Now and then, ships driven off-course by tropical storms wrecked upon the reefs surrounding the isle, but none of these visitors escaped to tell tales of an island ruled by monsters. It wasn't until a few decades ago, when an intrepid explorer named Rory Barbarosa discovered the uncharted island and made it back to the mainland, that proof of the mythical isle reached civilization. Rory's first trip to the isle rewarded him with great riches plundered from ancient Olman ruins, but he knew that if the local legends were true, even greater riches waited deeper in the isle's interior. While Rory never made it back to the Isle of Dread, his legacy lives on. Many explorers and adventurers continue to seek out the isle to this day. Most perish. Until only a few years ago, no one had even dared think about establishing a permanent colony on the isle. This changed with Farshore.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive at Farshore to discover it under attack by pirates. After aiding the colony's defense, the PCs are reunited with Lavinia Vanderboren. She tells them of her own troubles at sea, and of the new problem facing the colony. A pirate captured during the attack reveals that he and his mates were merely scouts. The Crimson Fleet knows of the colony's location, and in approximately two months, they will arrive in force to take what they can and burn the rest.

Before this event, the PCs are called upon to do what they can to prepare Farshore for the attack. Some of these tasks can be handled quickly and locally, but the most important missions take the PCs onto the mainland of the Isle of Dread, where they'll need to forge alliances with native peoples, secure access to natural resources, recover and repair the *Sea Wyvern*, and even face down the physical manifestation of an ancient Olman god. Each of these missions earns the party a number of victory points.

When the Crimson Fleet arrives, the PCs' accomplishments during the ensuing battle earn them additional victory points. In the final encounter they come face to face with Lavinia's brother Vanthus, now the half-fiend captain of a Crimson Fleet ship. At the battle's end, the victory points are totaled to determine the result of the final battle and Farshore's fate.

Adventure Hooks

If you're running "Tides of Dread" as a stand-alone adventure or as part of your own campaign, you might need another introduction to the adventure. Any of the affiliations described in the "Savage Tidings" article of *Dragon* Magazine #348 may provide a pretext for the PCs to travel to Farshore, as they all have representatives in the colony. Alternately, you could start your Savage Tide campaign with this adventure, in which case the PCs are members of Farshore already. If you start them at 1st level, use the accompanying Farshore Backdrop as inspiration for low-level adventures before you let the PCs brave the terrors of the mainland.

PART ONE: THE ISLE OF DREAD

Over 1,300 years ago, a fleet of Olman princes from across the eastern sea came upon a bounteous land and claimed it as their own. They cleared vast stretches of jungle on the island to plant crops, and built a fortified city that dwarfed all other settlements in the region atop a massive central plateau. Known as Thanaclan, this city became the heart of one of the wealthiest kingdoms of the far-flung Olman empire. After approximately 300 years of rule, the city-state of Thanaclan fell prey to the first savage tide. The tide washed over the entire island, bringing ruin, madness, and death, and what remained became known as the Isle of Dread.

The isle itself is a large landmass surrounded by treacherous reefs and smaller islands. Most of the island's coastline consists of rugged cliffs, but here and there isolated beaches allow safe landing. Most of the human population of the isle, descendants of the original rulers of Thanaclan, dwell on a southern peninsula, sheltered from the monsters and dinosaurs that rule the mainland by a great wall.

Weather on the Isle of Dread is, at best, uncomfortably warm and humid. Along the coast, temperatures have been

known to dip as low as 64° F, while atop the central plateau or in the depths of the jungles it often rises above 90° F. The bulk of the isle is covered with lush, tropical jungles, yet here and there reminders of the ancient Olmans can be found in the form of collapsed statues, ruined temples, and mysterious standing stones. Few examples of the isle's original fauna survive today (mostly limited to wild boars, rock baboons, or terror birds), for the isle is now overrun with terrible, legendary creatures. Chief and largest among these are the dinosaurs, or "thunder lizards," as the Olman natives call them. Yet there are other monsters dwelling in the hidden reaches of the isle, monsters that couple their fearsome countenances with an equally fearsome intellect.

As the PCs explore the Isle of Dread and its surrounding islands and waters, they'll certainly run afoul of its dangerous denizens. Most of these creatures are little more than animals, but some also possess a degree of intelligence that make them all the more deadly. The Isle of Dread is split into four encounter zones, each with its own table of wandering monsters. Check for random encounters four times a day by rolling d%; once at dawn, once at noon, once at dusk, and once at midnight. The chance of an encounter occurring varies according to the encounter zone. The actual timing of when a random encounter occurs is left to you; an encounter that occurs at "midnight" could take place any time between 10:00 PM and 4:00 AM.

Note: These wandering monster charts differ slightly from those presented in the Isle of Dread backdrop in *Dungeon* #114. This is intentional; not only are these new charts tailored for a group of 9th–10th-level characters, but they incorporate some additional monsters while phasing out other monsters that shouldn't be as commonly encountered in the Savage Tide version of the Isle of Dread.

Islands and Peninsula (10% chance of encounter): Dinosaurs are only rarely encountered here, with the majority of monsters being dire animals or other large fauna. In addition, many of these regions are inhabited by Olmans. Their unusual practices of involving necromancy in their burial rituals has the unfortunate side effect of increasing the presence of dangerous undead in these regions.

Surrounding Waters (4% chance of encounter): The waters surrounding the isle are only marginally safer than the isle itself. Most of the creatures encountered here aren't dangerous enough to menace a ship the size of the *Hellfish*, *Blue Nixie*, or *Sea Wyvern*, but those marked by an asterisk certainly could.

Isle Mainland (15% chance of encounter): The Isle of Dread itself is rife with dangerous creatures, the majority of which are dinosaurs. Statistics for several dinosaurs are presented in sidebars in this adventure. Worse, periodic planar breaches between the Isle of Dread and the Abyssal layer of Gaping Maw increase the likelihood of encountering lone demons on the mainland.

Central Plateau: The Isle of Dread's central plateau is shrouded in mystery and rumor; the Olmans view the place as taboo, and do not speak of it with outlanders. While reaching the central plateau is certainly not beyond the PCs' capabilities at this time, what awaits them there is beyond the scope of this adventure. Wandering encounters for the central plateau are detailed in *Dungeon* Magazine #145, in the adventure "City of Broken Idols."

Encounter Locations

The following entries give a brief description of specific areas of the Isle of Dread. Many of these locations are detailed further in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, but others are left to you to expand upon.

Aranea Lair: This arboreal village of cavelike webs is inhabited by dozens of araneas.

Ashfall Isle: Ashfall is a desolate rock, constantly in the shadow of Red Belcher's smoky plume. Little lives here.

Badwall Isle: This is a jagged islet with little vegetation and no safe shores upon which to land. A nest of two dozen wyverns claim its peaks.

Blackfen: This swamp is the territory of several bickering tribes of bullywugs, froglike humanoids that rarely venture

Island and Peninsula Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–02	1 dire tiger	8	*Monster Manual* 65
03–08	1d4 dire boars	6	*Monster Manual* 63
09–10	1 ahuizotl	6	*Fiend Folio* 14
11–12	1 weretiger	5	*Monster Manual* 174
13–14	1 mummy	5	*Monster Manual* 190
15–18	a anaconda	5	*Monster Manual* 280 (giant constrictor snake)
19–22	1 giant tarantula	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Huge spider)
23–25	1d4 wights	5	*Monster Manual* 255
26–27	1 wraith	5	*Monster Manual* 258
28–32	1d4 dire apes	5	*Monster Manual* 62
33–35	1d4 terror birds	5	*Fiend Folio* 175
36–38	1d6 rhagodessas	5	*Dungeon* #139
39–44	2d4 ghouls	4	*Monster Manual* 119
45–60	2d4 Olman hunters	4	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 117 (human fighter 1)
61–64	1d4 shrieking spiders	4	*Monster Manual* 289 (Large spiders)
65–72	2d6 human zombies	4	*Monster Manual* 266
73–77	3d4 dire rats	3	*Monster Manual* 64
78–83	3d4 human skeletons	3	*Monster Manual* 226
84–88	1 quickdeath mamba	3	*Monster Manual* 280 (Huge viper)
89–91	1 wasp swarm	2	*Fiend Folio* 172
92–95	1 monitor lizard	2	*Monster Manual* 275
96–100	1 jungle cobra	2	*Monster Manual* 280 (Large viper)

Aquatic Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–02	1 octopus tree*	12	*Fiend Folio* 131
03–06	1 megalodon*	11	*Monster Manual II* 147
07–15	1d4+2 ichthyosaurs	11	*Stormwrack* 145
16–20	1 plesiosaur*	10	*Stormwrack* 146
21–24	1 shipbreaker crab*	10	*Stormwrack* 142 (Gargantuan crab)
25–30	2d6 dire barracudas	10	*Stormwrack* 147
31–40	1d8 mashers	10	DUNGEON #141
41–45	1 giant squid*	9	*Monster Manual* 281
46–50	2d8 dire eels	9	*Stormwrack* 148
51–55	1 dire shark	9	*Monster Manual* 64
56–65	1d4 elasmosauruses*	9	*Monster Manual* 60
66–75	1d4+1 jellyfish swarms	8	*Stormwrack* 161
76–80	1 giant octopus*	8	*Monster Manual* 276
81–95	1d6 great white sharks	7	*Monster Manual* 279 (Huge shark)
96–100	1d8+4 ixitxachitls	7	*Monster Manual II* 128

far from their marshy homes. The largest tribe, the Burbalarg Tribe, dwells in the half-sunken ruins of an ancient Olman town.

Blisterhill Isle: This island of barren stony slopes is studded with dozens of active geysers.

Bloodwater Lake: This large lake is infested with dangerous menaces, including freshwater reptiles, huge schools of piranha, and worse. The lake is named not for the hue of its waters, but for the ferocity of its denizens.

Cankerdark: The noisome pits of this large cave network are more vertically aligned than horizontal, and are home to countless clinging and scuttling vermin.

Dark Mountain Pass (DUNGEON #142): This ancient Olman undergound pass also served as a tomb, but is now infested with vermin and scavengers.

Dragonhaunt Hollow: Only one true dragon currently dwells on the Isle of Dread. Xiureksor is a very old green dragon who spends most of her time sleeping in a deep cave under this boggy jungle.

Ember Lake: So named for the red, phosphorescent fish that dwell in its depths, Ember Lake is connected to the surrounding sea by several submerged channels. Aquatic reptiles like plesiosaurs are common in these waters.

Emerald Isle: This verdant isle is relatively safe—its largest predators are dire boars, crocodiles, and the occasional anaconda.

The Fangs of Zotzilaha (DUNGEON #143): Twin volcanoes that loom over the surrounding jungle, the Olmans hold that the bat god Zotzilaha dwells somewhere in the numerous caves along these dangerous peaks.

Farshore (DUNGEON #143): This colony, established by Verik and Larissa Vanderboren, is only a few years old—its future is uncertain.

Fireshriek Isle: Although this island is dominated by an active volcano, the eruptions (while common) tend to be relatively minor. The western and southern sections are home to many packs of terror birds, isolated families of dire apes, and smaller prey.

Fogmire (DUNGEON #142): Until recently, this fog-shrouded patch of jungle hid a terrible, secret—a shrine to Demogorgon built centuries ago by troglodyte cultists.

Gargoyle Aerie: This inhospitable reach of ragged mountains is riddled with caves that serve as the home for dozens of gargoyle tribes.

Glasswall Rift: A sizable rent in the mountainside here glitters by day, its razored walls of obsidian and other volcanic glass home to pteranodon nests and monstrous web-spinning spiders of all types. Tunnel entrances and pits in the rift's bed lead into the extensive caverns that riddle the isle's foundations.

Griff Isle: The largest of the isles surrounding the mainland, this verdant isle is named for the numerous flocks of hippogriffs that nest here.

Huhueteotl's Throne: Once a sizable Olman town, all that remains above the sunken swampland of this forgotten city is a black stone ziggurat capped by an immense throne bearing images of the Olman god of fire and the passage of time, Huhueteotl. On certain nights of the year, sinister fires burn in the swamp, and strange shapes can be seen cavorting atop the ruins.

Kopru Tunnel Entrance (DUNGEON #144): This unassuming coastal cavern actually represents the most direct route to the deep caverns and aberrant reaches below the Isle of Dread, places currently inhabited by the amphibious and evil kopru, but which actually far predate even them.

Lizardfolk Lair: This partially flooded cavern houses the largest tribe of lizardfolk on the Isle of Dread.

Lost Citadel: This glittering aerie is the last bastion of the "gods" that survived the destruction of Thanaclan. The citadel is made of gleaming stone covered in an opalescent shimmer that is entirely unspoiled by the ravages of time. The Olman believe their gods sleep here, awaiting the day the isle reverts to a paradise and they can rejoin their people again. Legends record that the courtyard contained nine stone archways and two pools—Truth (filled with blood) and Beauty (filled with crystal-clear water)—used to test souls. The temple is built on an impossibly high terrace cut into the mountains on the isle's western edge. It can sometimes be seen from the western sea or from certain angles on the plateau. A handful of princes did survive Thanaclan's destruction and escaped to this citadel. Some remain in *temporal stasis*, along with their weapons and sorcery.

Mantru (DUNGEON #145): The secrets of this mysterious village are known to very few beyond the edge of the isle's central plateau—none who dwell elsewhere on the island have visited the village and returned to tell of it in recent memory.

Olman Villages (DUNGEON #143): These seven villages comprise the bulk of the Olman population of the Isle of

Scale in Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
N
Badwall Isle
Red Belcher Isle
Ashfall Isle
Worm Reef
Wreck of the Gallivant
Skyscar Peak
Ember Lake
Kopru Tunnel Entrance
Glasswall Rift
Lost Citadel
Valley of Madness
Thanaclan
Mantru
Wreck of the Sea Wyvern
Thanegioth River
Dark Mountain Pass
Tivenskull Cave
Cankerdark
Standing Stones
Temple of the Jaguar
Skinrazer Rock
Blackfen
Phantom Village
Griff Isle
Shrine of Zotzilaha
The Fangs of Zotzilaha
Scorpion Isle
Rat's End
Emerald Isle
Fireshriek Isle
Thunder Reef
Blisterhill Isle
Scarlet Brotherhood Encampment
Tegumore
Bluefish Reef
Willow's Reef
Burnuao
More
Farshore
Kirikuka
ISLE OF DREAD

Mainland Encounters

Jungle	Swamp	Savannah	Mountain	Aquatic	Monster	Avg. EL	Source
—	—	01–05	—	—	1d12 diplodocuses	17	Page 41
01–03	01–03	—	—	—	1 red sundew	13	*Monster Manual II* 179
—	—	06–10	—	—	1d6 triceratopses	12	*Monster Manual* 61
04–06	—	11–15	—	—	1d4 stegosauruses	12	Page 54
07	04	—	—	01	1 hezrou	11	*Monster Manual* 44
08–10	05–12	16–18	—	—	1d8 parasaurolophuses	11	Page 44
11	13	—	01	—	1 retriever	11	*Monster Manual* 46
12–16	—	19–23	02–09	—	1d6 ankylosauruses	10	Page 37
17–19	14–18	24–26	10–12	—	1 greenvise	10	*Monster Manual II* 120
20–22	19–21	27–29	—	—	1d3 tyrannosauruses	10	*Monster Manual* 61
23–25	22–24	30–32	13–15	—	4 Brotherhood scouts	9	Page 35
—	—	—	—	02–15	1d4 elasmosauruses	9	*Monster Manual* 60
26–30	25–27	33–37	—	—	1d6 megaraptors	9	*Monster Manual* 60
—	—	38–40	16–20	16–18	1 roc	9	*Monster Manual* 215
31	28	41	21	19	1 vrock	9	*Monster Manual* 48
—	—	42–44	22–26	20–27	1d6 wyverns	9	*Monster Manual* 259
32–36	29–33	—	27–31	—	1d8 araneas	8	*Monster Manual* 15
37–41	34–36	45–49	—	—	2d4 deinonychuses	8	*Monster Manual* 60
—	37–39	—	—	—	1 treeleg spider	8	*Monster Manual* 289 (Gargantuan spider)
42–44	40–42	50–52	—	—	1 allosaurus	7	Page 35
—	—	53–57	32–39	28–35	2d4 dire bats	7	*Monster Manual* 62
—	—	—	40–44	—	1 emperor scorpion	5	*Monster Manual* 287 (Huge scorpion)
—	—	—	45–52	36–40	1d6 gargoyles	7	*Monster Manual* 113
—	43–50	—	—	41–52	1d6 giant crocodiles	7	*Monster Manual* 271
—	—	58–62	53–60	53–54	2d4 hippogriffs	7	*Monster Manual* 152
—	—	—	—	55–61	1d4 piranha swarms	7	*Stormwrack* 162
—	—	63–67	61–68	62–64	1d10 pteranodons	7	Page 47
45–49	—	68–72	—	—	1d6 terror birds	7	DUNGEON #142
—	51–58	—	—	65–72	2d6 bullywugs	6	DUNGEON #140
50–52	59–63	—	—	—	1d8 dimetrodons	6	Page 40
—	64–71	—	—	—	2d6 lizardfolk	6	*Monster Manual* 169
—	—	—	69–76	—	1d6 sawtail scorpions	6	*Monster Manual* 287 (Large scorpion)
53–57	72–76	—	—	—	1 shambling mound	6	*Monster Manual* 222
58–60	77–79	—	—	—	1 tendriculos	6	*Monster Manual* 241
61–64	80–87	—	77–84	—	2d6 troglodytes	6	*Monster Manual* 246
65–69	88–94	—	—	73–86	1 anaconda	5	*Monster Manual* 280 (giant constrictor snake)
70–72	—	73–77	—	—	1 giant tarantula	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Huge spider)
73–80	—	—	—	—	2d4+4 phanaton rangers	5	Page 47
81–83	95–97	78–82	—	—	1d6 rhagodessas	5	DUNGEON #139
84–88	—	83–87	85–92	—	2d6 neanderthals	5	*Frostburn* 145
—	—	88–92	93–00	—	2d6 baboons	4	*Monster Manual* 268
89–91	98–00	—	—	—	1d4 shrieking spiders	5	*Monster Manual* 289 (Large spiders)
92–00	—	93–00	—	87–00	2d4 Olman hunters	4	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 117 (human fighter 1)

Dread. Although independent, the leaders of these villages generally look to the village of Tanaroa for direction.

Phanaton Village: This village of arboreal platforms and cleverly hidden huts is inhabited by nearly 550 phanatons, small raccoonlike humanoids native to the Isle of Dread. Other phanaton settlements exist in the nearby jungles, but none are as large as this one.

Rat's End: This ragged settlement, built from ruined ships converted into poor-quality huts, has housed nearly two dozen pirates for several years. After the assault on Farshore at the start of this adventure, this village stands empty.

Red Belcher Isle: An active volcano makes this rugged isle uninhabitable to all but a few flocks of tenacious wyverns and pteranodons.

Reefs: Six major reefs surround the Isle of Dread—each is infested with dangerous sea creatures like monstrous crabs, dire eels, and mashers.

Rivenskull Cave: Actually several dozen caverns connected by narrow fissures, Rivenskull Cave is inhabited by five warring tribes of savage humans, throwbacks devolved from Olmans due to exposure to the mysterious primal fogs that sometimes visit the island's reaches.

Scarlet Brotherhood Encampment: The large number of dangerous creatures dwelling on this nameless island have traditionally warded the Olmans away from settling here. Not so for a small group of Scarlet Brotherhood missionaries, evil priests who follow Pyremius, god of fire, poison, and murder. The missionaries are a vanguard, evaluating the possibility for a future invasion of the isle. Although details of the encampment are beyond the scope of this adventure, PCs who explore the Isle of Dread are likely to encounter one of the encampment's exploration parties before long. A Brotherhood exploration party consists of four multiclassed monk/clerics. They scour the Isle of Dread for hidden magic and forgotten Olman relics, and view anyone else they encounter as competition fit only for swift murder. Only if one of the PCs happens to belong to the Scarlet Brotherhood can a violent clash be avoided.

Brotherhood Scout CR 5

Human monk 2/cleric 3
LE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +3
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 14
hp 31 (5 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk kama +6 (1d6+1) or mwk kama +4/+4 (1d6+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Stunning Fist 2/day (DC 15), smite 1/day (+4 attack, +3 damage)
Special Actions rebuke undead 2/day (+1, 2d6+2), turn water creatures or rebuke fire creatures 2/day (–1, 2d6+2)
Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (2d20 charges), Large scorpion venom (5 doses, DC 18, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str)
Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, +4 touch, +5 ranged touch)
2nd—*lesser restoration*, *produce flame*[D], *sound burst* (DC 15)
1st—*burning hands*[D] (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *sanctuary* (DC 14)
0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *guidance*, *resistance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Destruction, Fire

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8
SQ spontaneous casting (inflict spells)
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +4, Concentration +9, Hide +7, Jump +3, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Tumble +7
Possessions combat gear, masterwork kama, *amulet of natural armor +1*

Scorpion Isle: This rugged island is infested with all manner of monstrous scorpions, including an enormous ancient monster the size of a house the Olmans call "Cerattakatha."

Shrine of Zotzilaha (*Dungeon* #143): This cavern is visited once every few months by Olmans who bring offerings to appease the anger of the bat god.

Skinrazer Rock: Like Blisterhill Isle, dozens of geysers can be found on this inhospitable swath of stone that barely rises two dozen feet above sea level at its highest point. In many places, the rock itself is searing hot to the touch, heated

Allosaurus CR 7

N Huge animal
Monster Manual II 70
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +11

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 13
hp 78 (10 HD)
Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Spd 50 ft.
Melee bite +12 (2d8+7) and 2 claws +7 (2d4+3)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +22
Atk Options improved grab (bite), rake +12 (2d8+3)
Special Actions swallow whole, trample 1d8+10

Abilities Str 24, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 11
Feats Alertness, Run, Toughness, Track
Skills Listen +10, Spot +11

Rake (Ex) An allosaurus can make two rake attacks against any opponent it successfully grapples, provided it begins its turn already grappling the foe.

Swallow Whole (Ex) An allosaurus can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller than it by making a successful grapple check. A swallowed creature takes 2d8+8 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round, and can cut its way out with a light slashing or piercing weapon. The allosaurus's stomach is AC 12 and has 25 hit points. Once a creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. An allosaurus's gullet can hold 1 Medium, 4 Small, 16 Tiny, or 64 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 22. The save DC is Strength-based.

Recruiting Dinosaurs

Although it doesn't occur to Lavinia, one of the greatest resources on the Isle of Dread is its dinosaurs. Spells like *charm animal*, *dominate animal*, and *awaken*, as well as abilities like wild empathy can be used to "draft" numerous local denizens of the isle to Farshore's aid. Of course, managing dangerous animals is a task in and of itself, and if the PCs aren't careful, they could cause more harm then help by "recruiting" too many dinosaurs, only to have some (or all) of them revert to their true nature within Farshore's walls. A rogue allosaurus or frightened diplodocus can do as much (if not more) damage to the colony than the Crimson Fleet, so this plan must be executed carefully.

Only creatures of CR 2 or higher can really make a difference in the battle to come. When the Crimson Fleet attacks, award Victory Points to the PCs equal to twice the total of all recruited dinosaurs' CR scores. Thus, if the PCs recruit three ankylosauruses and a tyrannosaurus, they earn 58 Victory Points. The maximum amount of VP that can be earned from dinosaur recruits is 200 VP.

from below by pockets of lava and superheated steam.

Skyscar Peak: The highest peak on the Isle of Dread, the slopes of Skyscar Peak are a favored nesting ground for rocs.

Standing Stones: Olman ruins abound on the isle, yet few can match these immense standing stones in sheer spectacle. Two dozen stones stand here, said to mark the lost tombs of Olman princes.

Tar Pits (*Dungeon* #143): Often visited by Olman natives, this immense tar pit provides materials used to waterproof boats and the roofs of huts.

Temple of the Jaguar (*Dungeon* #143): This mysterious temple hides a cache of magic weapons left by an extinct tribe of catlike humanoids known as the rakastas.

Thanaclan (*Dungeon* #145): Once the heart of the Olman empire, this ruin is known now as the City of Broken Idols. What terrifying menace now rules here is unknown.

Thanegioth River: The mightiest river on the Isle of Dread, the frequent rapids along this waterway make it a poor choice for exploration via boat.

Valley of Madness: Although the plant known locally as "loco weed" can be found in many places on the Isle of Dread, the narcotic plant grows most thickly in this secluded valley.

Wreck of the *Gallivant* (*Dungeon* #144): The largest sunken shipwreck off the shores of the Isle of Dread, this immense galleon is now the home of an equally immense dragon turtle named Emraag.

Wreck of the *Sea Wyvern* (*Dungeon* #143): This is where the PCs' ship wrecked at the end of "The Sea Wyvern's Wake."

PART TWO: RAIDERS FROM RAT'S END

After Vanthus Vanderboren's botched robbery in "The Bullywug Gambit," the scoundrel fled the Sasserine region on a small ship crewed by thugs he'd hired for the job. One thing led to another, and after a bloody mutiny, Vanthus was set adrift in a longboat to die of starvation. Yet fate had another destiny in mind for the treacherous cur, and two days later he was captured by a Crimson Fleet ship called the *Brine Harlot*.

Over the next few months, Vanthus's skill at lying, treachery, and misdirection was put to good use. The same glib tongue and willingness to do whatever it takes to get ahead that served him so well in becoming a ranking member of the Lotus Dragons saved him from more than a keelhauling, and by the end of his second month aboard the *Brine Harlot* he was a respected and feared member of the crew. Upon reaching the Crimson Fleet's home port of Scuttelcove, Vanthus wasted no time selling out his captain to the mysterious leaders of the fleet, revealing the *Brine Harlot*'s hidden allegiances to the Scarlet Brotherhood. The rest of the *Harlot*'s crew was put to death, and Vanthus was granted captainship of the vessel as a reward.

Faced with a responsibility to find new venues for pillaging, Vanthus recalled a fat ledger written in his father's hand that he'd stolen from the family vault. Although he'd long since lost the ledger, he remembered its contents—extensive notes on a colony named Farshore his father established on the Isle of Dread. Eager to appear useful to his new masters, Vanthus took this information to them. What Vanthus couldn't know was that the Crimson Fleet already had interests on the Isle of Dread, albeit at the opposite end of the isle from Farshore. Likewise, the Crimson Fleet had no inkling that a burgeoning Sasserine colony was located on the isle of Temute to the south of their own sinister interests. To show their thanks, the leaders made Vanthus a captain in their fleet—after submitting him to an Abyssal initiation and transformation that would change young Vanderboren for the worse.

Defending Farshore

The pirates of Rat's End are a sorry lot. Led by a murderous scoundrel named Slipknot Peet, these outcasts from piratical fleets across the Vohoun Ocean have grandiose plans of building their own fleet and taking to the seas. Unfortunately, infighting and bickering take precedence, and every time a plan to organize comes along, internal treachery cuts it down. Slipknot Peet is the latest in a long line of leaders of Rat's End—the fact that he's held the position for nearly a year is due more to his luck and reputation than to any real leadership qualities.

When Slipknot Peet was contacted by the Crimson Fleet (via a *crystal ball* with *telepathy*) about scouting out the supposed colony, he saw it as an opportunity. He browbeat the entirety of Rat's End onto their only seaworthy ship, the *Hellfish*, and sailed for Farshore immediately. At first, the scouting mission went without a hitch; the pirates observed Farshore without being spotted for three days. Yet Slipknot Peet's greed soon got the best of him.

Not long before the PCs arrived at the end of "Here There be Monsters," the *Hellfish* sailed into Farshore. Half the crew boarded the *Blue Nixie* while the rest stormed into the settlement. Their plan was simple: kill and subdue the weaker colonists and burn what buildings didn't look like they held any loot.

The PCs arrive well after the attack on Farshore has begun. The Rat's End pirates are focused on the colony itself, and aren't paying attention to anything approaching from the sea. The Olman guides transporting the PCs want nothing to do with the fight, but are willing to row up quietly and allow the PCs to debark at the northernmost pier of the Farshore waterfront.

Screams fill the smoke-filled air as cackling, howling men dressed in filthy armor and waving rusty, ragged weapons press the attack against Farshore's unorganized defense. Up the hill, several buildings have been lit on fire, and issuing from one nearby are frantic screams. Lying in the sand in front of another building is the body of a well-dressed man with a bloody wound to the chest and a savage gash across his face. His body is surrounded by fragile glassware spilled from a case he was carrying. His chest rises and falls feebly, though for how much longer is uncertain.

Further south, a large band of filthy men are happilly smashing in the windows of what appears to be a chapel. More pirates are busy trying to bash in the chapel's front doors with a heavy wooden beam. Terrified screams coming from within punctuate each of the ram's blows.

Nearby, a hulking half-orc with blotchy, yellow skin and a leering, toothy smile chases a red haired young woman around a neighboring building, shouting lurid propositions.

Deeper in the village, a group of young men armed with swords make a stand against what appears to be the pirate leader, a tall and dangerous-looking human who laughs as he deflects their attacks with obvious ease.

Finally, a group of colonists desperately try to extinguish a fire consuming a large building to the southeast, while others brave the flames to rescue its contents. More commotion can be heard from deeper in the village, but the thick, billowing smoke effectively masks what is transpiring there.

In order to successfully drive off the pirates, the PCs must complete five of the following encounters. Some of the conflicts are on timers; if the PCs take too long to get to them, the encounter is automatically lost.

1. Trapped! (EL 2)

Burning roof beams block the entrance to this building. The only windows are at the front, and each is engulfed in flames. A character that tries to clamber through the window takes 1d6 points of fire damage and must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid catching fire. He must also make a DC 10 Climb check to reach the window, which is six feet off the ground.

Attempts to bash down the front door take a DC 22 Strength check. With each check, a character must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 1d6 points of fire damage.

The woman trapped in the building is **Hilde Swenten** (NG female human commoner 3; hp 10; Fort +1, Ref +0), an accomplished farmer from Sasserine who saw in the Vanderboren's plan for Farshore great opportunity. She hid in this storage hut when the pirates attacked. One of them tossed a vial of alchemist's fire through a window, and the hut went up like dry kindling. Hilde huddles at the back of the building, furthest from the flames, but is too terrified to attempt an escape on her own.

Development: Starting two rounds after the PCs land, Hilde Swenten must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) each round to avoid choking and coughing from the smoke. If she chokes for 2 consecutive rounds, she takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Once she takes 11 points of nonlethal damage, she falls unconscious; 1d6 rounds later she begins to suffocate and drops to 0 hit points. The next round she drops to –1 hit points, and on the third round she dies.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs rescue Hilde, grant them a CR 2 experience award.

2. Bleeding Out

When the pirates landed, Professor **Hevrik Aldwattle** (NG human wizard 5/expert 2) was here in his laboratory. As he saw the pirates racing up toward his home, he gathered a boxful of lab equipment and tried to flee, only to stumble into a passing pirate who quickly cut him down with a critical strike to the chest.

Although he's stable, Aldwattle isn't out of danger. Every five rounds, there's a 20% chance a passing pirate notices the dying man and takes 1d4+1 rounds to loot his body before finishing him off.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs move Professor Aldwattle to somewhere safe, revive him, or protect him until the attack is over, grant them a CR 2 experience award.

3. Church Crashers (EL 6)

Terrified screams come from within this large, simple church. A group of pasty-skinned brutes are the cause—two of the five Rat's End pirates assaulting

ANKYLOSAURUS **CR 7**

N Huge animal

Monster Manual II 70

Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +7

AC 22, touch 6, flat-footed 22

hp 121 (9 HD)

Fort +16, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Spd 20 ft.

Melee tail slap +13 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +23

Special Actions trample 2d12+13

Abilities Str 29, Dex 7, Con 26, Int 1, Wis 9, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will

Skills Listen +7, Spot +7

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 23. The save DC is Strength-based.

the church amuse themselves by breaking out windows and leering in at the colonists cowering inside. The other three use a makeshift battering ram to break the barricaded front doors down.

Creatures: Within the chapel huddle twelve defenseless colonists who sought out the church on instinct when the attack came. The chapel's keeper, **Vesserin Catherly** (NG male half-elf cleric 6), is currently aiding the Jade Ravens and Lavinia in a prolonged battle with more Rat's End pirates near the Clayworks to the south, and won't be able to make it back here in time to aid in the chapel's defense. The five pirates intent on menacing the colonists here are unaware of the PCs unless they call attention to themselves.

Every other round (starting on the round after the PCs arrive), the pirates make an attempt to break open the doors to the chapel. Working together with the improvised battering ram, they have a +9 Strength check; it takes a DC 24 Strength check to batter down the doors. Once they knock down the doors, the pirates begin butchering the colonists inside—every 1d4 rounds, one of the colonists is murdered.

Rat's End Pirates (5) **CR 2**
Human rogue 1/fighter 1
CE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common
AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
hp 18 (2 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1
Spd 30 ft.
Melee scimitar +4 (1d6+2/18–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding
Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)
Skills Balance +3, Climb +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Profession (sailor) +6, Swim +2, Tumble +3, Use Rope +5
Possessions studded leather armor, scimitar, light wooden shield

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs save all of the colonists in the chapel, grant them a CR 3 experience award.

4. The Chase (EL 2)

A muscle-bound pirate, his pus-yellow skin patchy with warts, doggedly pursues a red haired woman around this building. This is Anvil, the first mate of the *Hellfish*, and he's been chasing the woman, **Ruby the Weaver** (NG female human expert 1), for some time already.

Only 3d4 rounds after the PCs arrive, Ruby stumbles and falls, exhausted. Anvil's on her immediately, but before he can carry out his plan, Ruby finds a hidden reserve of strength. She grabs a splintered piece of wood and jams it into Anvil's neck, inflicting 2d4 points of damage. In a fit of rage, Anvil lashes back at her one round later with his scimitar, killing her.

Anvil, Rat's End Pirate: hp 18; see above (Rat's End Pirate).

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs rescue Ruby, grant them a CR 2 experience award.

5. Slipknot Peet (EL 10)

A group of swordsmen surrounds a tall pirate with deeply tanned, leathery skin. He wields a wickedly curved rapier in one hand and a punching dagger in the other, and coils of knotted rope are wrapped around his arms and torso in a tangled display. Many of the ropes are fashioned into nooses, and hanging from quite a few are morbid trinkets like jawbones, skeletal hands, and leathery trophies. From his neck dangles a tattered hangman's noose, and as he leads the fight against the colonists in this square, he curses and roars orders to his fellows, who seem almost as frightened of him as the colonists he's trying to murder.

This is Slipknot Peet, the captain of the *Hellfish* and lord of Rat's End. Years ago he had his own ship and raided along the coast near Sasserine. Eventually he was captured and taken to the city square in Sasserine to be hanged. As he stood on the block with the noose around his neck, he defiantly spat at and cursed the assembled crowd. An agent of the Crimson Fleet happened to be among them. Peet's indomitable spirit impressed the agent, so when Peet dropped, the agent severed the hanging rope with a well-placed arrow. He then helped Peet escape and smuggled him out of the city.

Peet later became a member of the Crimson Fleet, rising quickly in rank and earning the nickname "Slipknot." Eventually, his foul manner and loose tongue landed him in trouble with the Fleet—not enough to have him executed, but enough that the Fleet sent him into exile to the Isle of Dread, ordering him to take up command of a small band of loosely-affiliated pirates and scoundrels stationed at Rat's End on nearby Emerald Isle.

As the PCs reach this fight, Slipknot Peet cuts down the last colonist and he and his men turn to face the PCs, covered with blood and leering with menace. In his bloodlust, Peet doesn't realize that the PCs are unlikely to be mere colonists (what with their better equipment and likely diverse makeup), and brings the attack to them as well. If things start to go poorly, he howls for aid. Any pirates that remain alive in areas 3 and 4 abandon their tasks and quickly come to aid their captain. Slipknot Peet fights to the death.

Slipknot Peet **CR 9**
Male human rogue 6/dread pirate 3
CE Medium humanoid
Complete Adventurer 39
Init +7; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common
AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 55 (9 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +11, **Will** +2; evasion
Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *keen rapier* +12 (1d6+2/15–20) or +1 *keen rapier* +10 (1d6+2/15–20) and mwk punching dagger +9 (1d4/×3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +8
Atk Options sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear flask of alchemist's fire (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2)
Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 15
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +2

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Appraise +8, Balance +13, Bluff +13, Climb +7, Intimidate +17, Jump +11, Knowledge (geography) +3, Profession (sailor) +13, Swim +9, Tumble +13, Use Rope +11

Possessions combat gear, *+2 studded leather armor*, *+1 keen rapier*, masterwork punching dagger, belt pouch containing a pink crystal frog worth 350 gp, golden death's head amulet worth 150 gp, seven jeweled silver and gold bracelets worth a total of 1,000 gp, platinum hoop earring worth 300 gp, 35 gp

Rat's End Pirates (6): hp 18 each; see page 38.

6. History Aflame (EL 3)

The Farshore Hall of Records has been put to the torch by the pirates. The men and women struggling to save the contents of this building gesture desperately for help, and are having little success extinguishing the hungry flames with their bucket brigade. Aware of this, some colonists dart in and out of the building to rescue armloads of books and other records. The entire affair is organized by a frantic **Jeran Emrikad** (LN human wizard 2/rogue 1), the keeper of the hall of records.

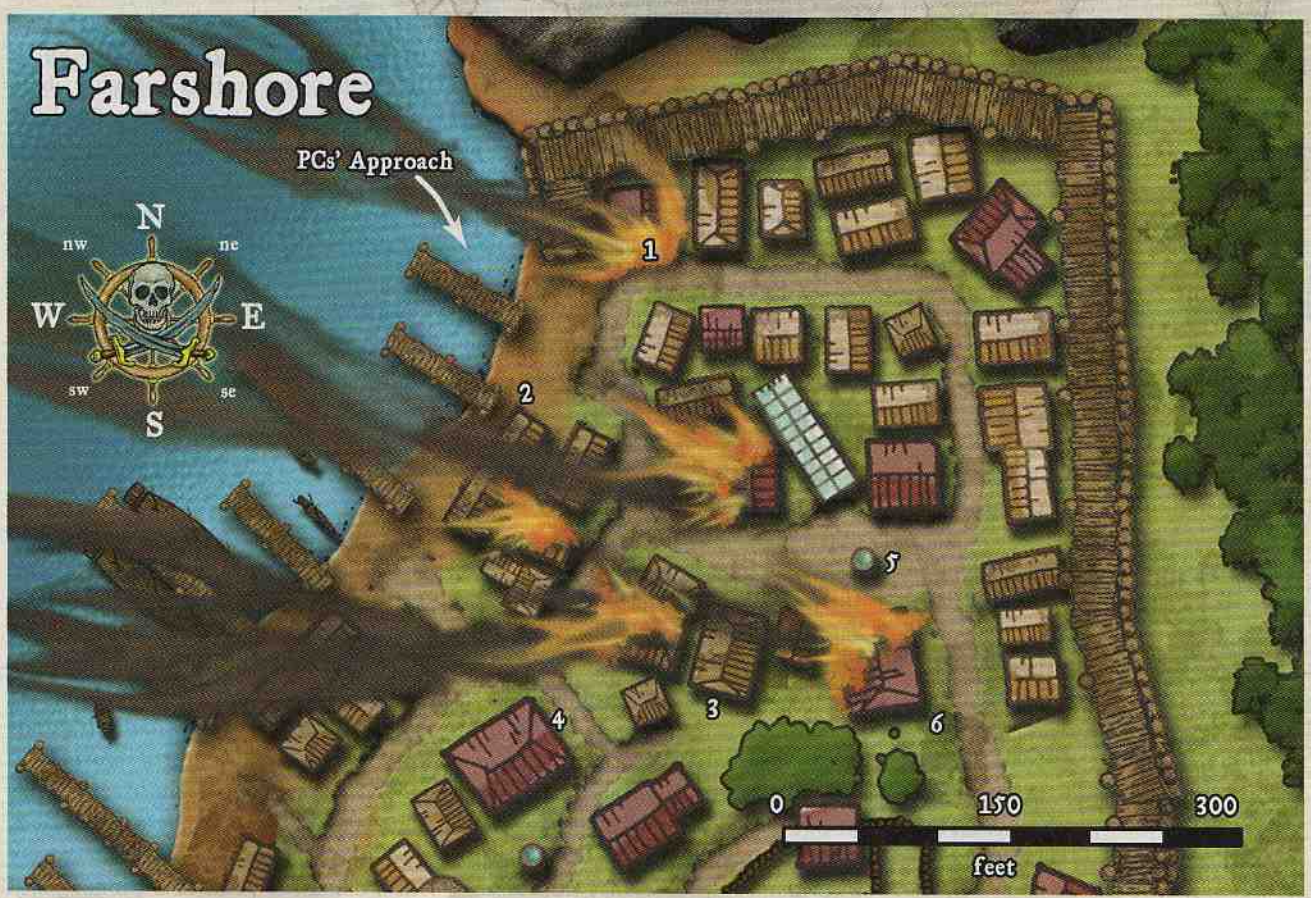
If the PCs act quickly, they may be able to save the Hall of Records from burning to the ground. Some spells, such as *quench*, multiple *pyrotechnics* spells, or *sleet storm* can quickly extinguish the flames. Others, such as *haste* or *summon monster* can speed the bucket brigade or augment the number of helpers to the point where the fire can be contained. Spells like *resist energy* or *protection from energy* can also help, granting the colonists the ability to target burning sections without fear of harm. You should judge the efficiency of any plan the PCs come up with—if it seems like the plan could extinguish the fire within a few minutes, the building can be saved.

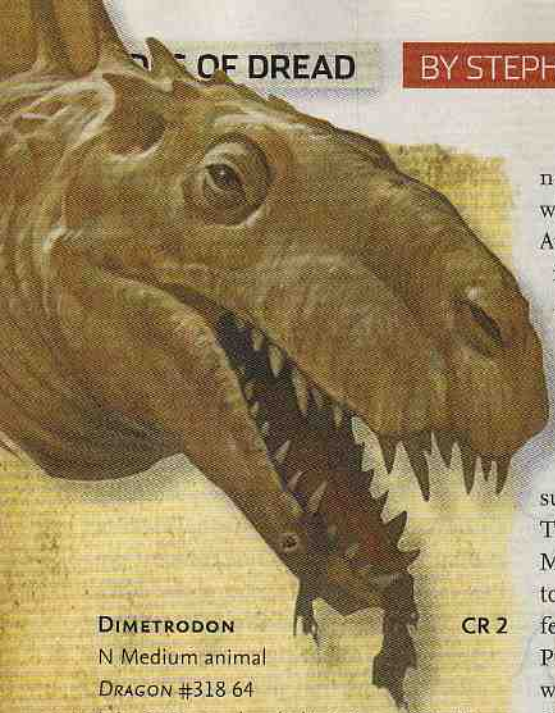
Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs put out the fire, grant them a CR 3 experience award.

The Smoke Clears

As the PCs fight, other groups of pirates are busy attacking other parts of Farshore. These pirates are opposed by Lavinia and her mercenary band, the Jade Ravens. As long as the PCs survive and defeat the pirates in the preceding encounters, you can assume that Lavinia and the rest are equally successful. If the PCs fail to defend Farshore, the Rat's End pirates are eventaully defeated but at the cost of more lives. This imparts a –500 victory point penalty when you determine their overall success at the end of the adventure..

Once the pirate attack is over, frightened citizens slowly emerge from battered homes and shelters. Lavinia appears out of the smoke tired and bewildered, accompanied by the Jade Ravens. She quickly spots the PCs and rushes over to greet them, her joy at





DIMETRODON **CR 2**
N Medium animal
DRAGON #318 64
Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +2, Spot +6
AC 13, touch 8, flat-footed 13
hp 33 (4 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1
Spd 10 ft., swim 10 ft.; burst of speed
Melee bite +7 (1d8+6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +7
Abilities Str 18, Dex 6, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Toughness
Skills Listen +2, Spot +6, Swim +15
Burst of Speed (Ex) Up to three times per hour, a dimetrodon can increase its land speed to 60 feet for one round as a free action. During this round, it gains a +2 dodge bonus to its Armor Class.

being reunited washing away the terror of the pirate attack. Lavinia and the Jade Ravens are detailed in the accompanying Farshore backdrop article, but if you're playing the entire campaign, the PCs need no introductions to their patron and the Jade Ravens. Not long after the PCs are reunited with Lavinia, a new figure arrives on the scene. This is Lord Manthalay Meravanchi, a towering and handsome man with a well-groomed beard, clad in a shining suit of mithral chainmail. If Avner Meravanchi is with the PCs, he immediately abandons them to greet his uncle Manthalay, who seems surprised to see Avner. A DC 20 Sense Motive notes that this surprise is tempered with frustration and perhaps anger—Avner's reputation as a troublemaker is well known to Manthalay, but he's family, so he's accepted with open arms nevertheless.

Lavinia soon suggests that everyone retire to the Farshore Chapel to discuss not only the PCs' arrival but, more importantly, the nature of this surprise attack by the pirates of Rat's End. The PCs, Lavinia, the Jade Ravens, and the Meravanchis are joined by the rest of the town council as well. This includes Professor Hevrik Aldwattle (assuming the PCs saved him in area **2** above), a tired and worried-looking man named Vesserin Catherly (keeper of the Farshore Chapel), a bruised and angry woman named Telda Syren (an herbalist, naturalist, and expert on the flora of the Isle of Dread), and a gruff and short-tempered man named Ulvar Kabbanja (leader of the Farshore millita). Any NPC allies who survived the *Sea Wyvern's* wreck and the journey south with the PCs in "Here There Be Monsters" are also present.

Lavinia's first order of business is to ask the other council members for a report on the damage to Farshore. Each council member speaks of damage to buildings, a few losses to fire, and a few deaths, but in the end, Farshore was lucky. Only ten colonists were killed (in addition to any the PCs weren't able to save), resulting in the colony's current population of 240 (as presented in the Farshore backdrop in this issue). The pirates were disorganized and seemed to be more interested in spreading fear and robbing people than actually doing a lot of damage—everyone agrees that the fortuitous arrival of the PCs may well have been the key factor in weathering the pirate attack with few losses.

Lavinia then addresses the PCs, telling them that when their ships were separated at sea during the storm, Lavinia feared the worst. She's overjoyed to see that they survived, and officially introduces them to the rest of the town council, calling them her personal heroes and explains to the council that the PCs are, in large part, responsible for the supplies and her return to Farshore. This favoritism, of course, may immediately compound any rifts or sense of competition with the Jade Ravens, and certainly sets up Manthalay Meravanchi's camp as politically opposed to the PCs, but for now, everyone keeps their opinions to themselves.

Lavinia then inquires about the *Sea Wyvern* and the PCs' adventures since they were separated. Allow the PCs to recount their exploits, and when they're done Lavinia promises them that she'll do what she can to aid in the recovery and repair of their ship. At this point, several colonists burst into the room, shouting excitedly and waving a sheaf of papers. It seems that something dire has been discovered on board the captured *Hellfish*—this piratical assault was only a scouting party. The Crimson Fleet is coming to Farshore.

The Interrogation of Lefty the Pirate

Fortunately, there is one source that may be able to help. During the battle, one of the Rat's End pirates was captured alive. This should be a pirate that the PCs captured, but if they left no survivors, the pirate's one that the Jade Ravens caught. An interrogation of the captive is the best way to find out more about the Crimson Fleet's interest in Farshore, and if the PCs don't think of it, Lavinia suggests it.

The pirate in question is a pitiful scoundrel named Lefty. Lefty was part of a merchant ship's crew that mutinied and fled south to avoid capture, only to be caught by an ocean current on the unforgiving rocks of Scorpion Isle. He managed to make it south to Emerald Isle on a home made raft, and joined with the pirates of Rat's End after he proved his reprehensible worth by killing two of his crewmates in a violent bloodsport put on for the pirates' entertainment.

Lefty's features are bruised and sunken. His skin is hot to the touch, one of his eyes is blackened, and he is missing his left hand. Only this last wound is old. Lefty's initial attitude is unfriendly—the amount of information the PCs can extract from him depends on his attitude, as detailed below. Lavinia volunteers to try to interrogate him using her skills at Diplomacy, but

cedes the actual work to the PCs if they prefer. Other methods, such as Intimidate checks or enchantment spells, can also extract Lefty's lore.

Hostile (Diplomacy DC 4 or less): Lefty curses and threatens the PCs, promising to return after death to murder them if they don't let him go.

Unfriendly (Diplomacy DC 5): Lefty remains surly, quiet, and unresponsive. He's pretty sure the colonists have already decided to execute him, and doesn't see how telling their leaders anything can change his fate.

Indifferent (Diplomacy DC 15): Lefty begs for his life, arguing that he only went along with the Rat's End pirates because he was a coward. His eyes widen if asked about the Crimson Fleet, but he has nothing to say about them other than to confirm that, "They're coming... and ye'd best not be here when they arrive!"

Friendly (Diplomacy DC 25): Lefty admits that he and the other pirates came from Rat's End, and that no one remains there to be a problem now. Their captain, Slipknot Peet, brought everyone on this attack, which was supposed to be a scouting mission. Slipknot Peet had been in contact with the Crimson Fleet (Lefty's not sure how, only that "magic was involved"), and they'd promised the Rat's End pirates a place in their fleet if they scouted out Farshore for the next few weeks. Apparently, a large force of Crimson Fleet ships is scheduled to arrive in the region "on other business," and at that time they would like to ransack Farshore, using the intelligence gathered by the Rat's End pirates to ensure victory. Slipknot didn't reveal to his crew how many Crimson Fleet ships were on the way, but when he decided to attack Farshore on his own, he did mention that they had two months to loot the place and escape to other waters with their booty before the Crimson Fleet got here.

Helpful (Diplomacy DC 40): Lefty reveals everything (as detailed above under the entry for "friendly") and honestly regrets his wicked life. He begs for mercy, and if granted it, could become a loyal henchman to one of the PCs.

Lefty's fate is left to the PCs to decide. Lavinia would rather keep him alive and give him a chance to redeem himself if he's at least made friendly, otherwise she suggessts imprisoning him until the *Blue Nixie* can make her way back to Sasserine, whereupon he'll be turned over to the city for justice. Manthalay Meravanchi would rather see Lefty executed, arguing that his crimes were committed in Farshore, so he should be tried and punished in Farshore. Lefty could quickly become a poster child for the campaign for lord-mayor of Farshore (see the Backdrop article for more details on this political event).

Dreadful Exploration

News of the advance of the Crimson Fleet should send chills down the PCs' spines; it certainly does to the rest of Farshore. The magnitude of the threat is no more obvious than in the fact that preparing Farshore for a defense against the imminent attack is one of the only things that Lavinia and Manthalay can agree upon. Both hope that the PCs are willing to help, although only Lavinia's not too proud to ask the PCs directly for their aid.

In going over the colony's defenses, Lavinia comes to several conclusions:

- There are a lot of places where Farshore could be improved and fortified. Lavinia's created a list of possible places for improvement, including the chapel, the harbor, the infirmary, the militia, the palisade, and the watchtowers. Other areas of Farshore can certainly be improved as well, although these improvements aren't likely to have military applications. Dragon Magazine #352 presents a full list of these improvements, and the Farshore backdrop provides details on how the PCs can organize these improvements and what they grant.
- Farshore's militia isn't enough to defend against a large-scale attack; the fact that it was barely able to hold its own against one small ship makes this clear. Without help from the Olman islanders who dwell in the nearby seven villages, things look grim indeed. Lavinia needs the PCs to travel with all haste to the village of Tanaroa

Diplodocus **CR 12**

N Colossal animal

Dragon #318 64

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +21, Spot +22

AC 14, touch 2, flat-footed 14

hp 406 (28 HD)

Fort +27, **Ref** +16, **Will** +10

Spd 20 ft.

Melee* tail slap +20 (4d8+35)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

Base Atk +21; **Grp** +54

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Special Actions tail sweep, trample 2d8+24

*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 44, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (tail slap), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Listen), Skill Focus (Spot)

Skills Listen +21, Spot +22

Tail Sweep (Ex) As a standard action, a diplodocus can sweep a half-circle with a radius of 40 feet extending from an intersection on the edge of its space. Any creatures smaller than the diplodocus within the swept area take 2d8+24 points of damage (Reflex DC 41 half). The save DC is Strength-based.

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 41. The save DC is Strength-based.

(the largest of the seven villages) and do whatever it takes to gain the support of the Olman warriors.

- In addition, there are other, stranger tribes of humanoids dwelling in the interior, tribes whose aid would doubtless further shore up Farshore. The phanatons are one such tribe—securing their aid can help Farshore's defenses. Local legends also tell of a race of catlike humanoids called "rakastas." The locals believe that the last of the rakastas have died out, but they were renowned for their masterwork weapons. Perhaps hidden caches of rakasta weaponry still exist at the sites of their old temples.
- Many supplies were damaged in the recent attack, supplies that could be replaced by the cargo still carried by the *Sea Wyvern*. For that matter, if the *Sea Wyvern* herself could be repaired, she could give Farshore a huge advantage in defending against pirates. Lavinia needs the PCs to return to the wreck site, effect repairs, and sail the *Sea Wyvern* back with her cargo.
- The Isle of Dread itself has resources that could prove helpful. A large tar pit could supply the isle with tar to shore up defenses and repair damaged ships and buildings, but only if access to the tar pits can be gained.

Once the PCs are familiar with the situation, they are free to handle their tasks in any order they wish. Farshore becomes their home base for these explorations, and there's certainly a large amount of work that needs to be done there as well. The accompanying backdrop on Farshore presents several additional adventures and tasks the PCs can take on to prepare for the assault, as well as numerous NPCs with which the PCs can interact. The rest of this chapter concerns itself with what lies beyond Farshore's walls.

Lefty

During this adventure, as the PCs accomplish their various missions, they earn victory points. When the Crimson Fleet arrives, the PCs' successes and failures during the battle also earn them victory points. When the battle is finally over, the total number of victory points amassed by the PCs throughout this entire adventure is what determines the final outcome and Farshore's fate.

PART THREE: ZOTZILAHA'S WRATH

Although Farshore is on good terms with the Olmans of the surrounding seven villages, the Olmans have been wary about using their own to aid in the defense of this new colony. The villagers of Tanaroa in particular have been hesitant about supplying such aid, and since the other six villages look to the Tanaroans for leadership, the other villages have been falling in line. If the village of Tanaroa can be convinced to come to Farshore's aid, the other six villages will do so as well.

Tanaroa is located at the southern end of the narrow isthmus that connects the southern peninsula to the mainland of the Isle of Dread. Preventing the passage of the terrible beasts of the mainland into this sheltered peninsula is the Great Wall, a fifty-foot-high barricade that stretches over two miles. Built during the height of the Olman empire over 1,000 years ago, the Great Wall's original purpose is long forgotten. Today, it serves as an important barrier, protecting the seven villages from the monsters that dwell to the north.

Tanaroa's proximity to the Great Wall is the primary reason it is the most important of the seven villages. They share a similar layout—four groups of huts set at four equidistant points delineate the compounds of four clans and surround a central pyramid that serves as a temple and town square. Currently, the four clans are the Ape, Tiger, Boar, and Sea Turtle clans. Members of a clan hold that these animals represent their inner selves, which has led to specialization between the clans. The people of the Boar clan are the builders and craftsmen, the Ape clan are farmers and entertainers, the Tiger clan hunters and gatherers, and the Sea Turtle clan fishermen and sailors.

Although each village clan has a male leader, command of each village falls to a female chieftain. The only other official of importance is the village's Zombie Master (or Mistress)—an advisor to the chief and the religious leader of the village. The animation of zombies is an important part of Olman culture, who view the creation of "walking ancestors" as a necessary evil to protect their underground catacombs.

Tanaroa (Village): Conventional, Magical; AL NG; Population 418; 200 gp limit; Assets 4,180 gp; Islolated (100% humans)

Authority Figures: **J'kal**, chieftain (NG female human ranger 6); **Mvembi**, zombie master (N male human cleric 6)

Wings of Fire (EL 9)

Arriving in Tanaroa, the PCs find the village in the middle of a religious ceremony. A pulsating rhythm pounded out

on hollowed logs accompanies a frenzied dance by dozens of warriors wearing large masks depicting a monstrous bat. All the while, the villagers chant to a charred bat totem at the center of a huge flaming pyre erected at the foot of the central pyramid. The word they chant is the same one, over and over: "Zotzilaha."

The entire village of Tanaroa is at the ritual, and as the PCs approach, the villagers pay them little attention. Before the PCs can make their presence fully known or reach any of the village's leaders, the effigy flashes with a sudden blast of brilliance. A cascade of sparks and flame from the burning pyre elicits startled screams from the villagers. A shape becomes momentarily visible in the fire as the effigy itself comes to life. A lean humanoid figure covered in short black fur rises from the flames, its head that of a snarling bat with glowing red eyes. Large membranous wings from its back beat against the flames like a bellows, sending hot cinders swirling. The creature shrieks out a short phrase in Olman—anyone who speaks the language (or who asks what the creature said later) understands it: "Zotzilaha hears your sniveling prayers! You would appease the Great Bat? Then return what has been stolen or burn!" If any of the PCs carries the bat idol found in the city of Tamoachan in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," he can understand this threat even if he doesn't speak Olman—further, he knows that what the creature speaks of is the idol he carries.

The batlike humanoid form bursts into flame, sending a flight of bats with wings of fire spiraling into the air above the effigy. At the same moment, a tremor rumbles through the ground and in the distance to the northwest, the two great volcanoes known as the Fangs of Zotzilaha flash with fresh plumes of fire and smoke. The eruption itself is minor, one of many the active volcanoes constantly emit, yet its timing is enough to send the village into a blind panic.

Creatures: The PCs have just witnessed a visitation from Zotzilaha, the bat god of the Olmans. The fire bats that emerged from the fire are his minions, and quickly set to spreading word of his displeasure by attacking the villagers. There are seven fire bats in all; the villagers do little but run from the elementals. Once any PC attacks one of the bats, all of them focus on the PCs.

Fire Bats (7) **CR 3**

NE Small elemental (fire)

Monster Manual II 102

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages Ignan

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13

hp 21 (6 HD); regeneration 5

Immune fire; elemental traits

Fort +1, **Ref** +8, **Will** +0

Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 10 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee bite +8 (1d6–1 plus 1d6 fire)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** –1

Atk Options attach, burn, devour

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 5

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Hide +10, Listen +5, Spot +5

Attach (Ex) If a fire bat hits with a bite, it latches onto its opponent, effectively grappling its prey, and is considered flat-footed. An attached fire bat can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached fire bat through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the fire bat.

Burn (Ex) Anyone hit by a fire bat must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid catching on fire. The fire burns for 1d4 rounds, and may be extinguished with a move action. Creatures hitting a fire bat with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take 1d6 fire damage, and also catch fire if they fail this save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Devour (Ex) Once attached, a fire bat devours flesh, automatically dealing 1d6–1 points of damage and another 1d6 points of fire damage each round it remains attached. After dealing 6 points of bite damage, it is sated; on the next round it detaches and flies away to digest its meal.

Regeneration (Ex) Cold deals lethal damage to a fire bat.

Appeasing the Bat God

How the PCs handle themselves in this fight determines how the villagers respond to them. Only if the PCs help defend the village and fight off the fire bats do they have a chance at securing Olman aid for the coming Crimson Fleet attack. While the villagers are still too frightened to exit their huts, the chieftain of Tanaroa, a wizened old woman named J'kal, readily approaches the party. J'kal speaks Common, and she either showers the PCs with thanks for their role in defending the village or curses them for being cowards and standing idly by.

J'kal informs the PCs that, while their heroic aid against the fire bats certainly deserves reciprocation, she cannot spare any of her village's warriors while Zotzilaha is angry. Recently, the Fangs of Zotzilaha have been shaking the island with tremors and sending thick clouds of ash into the air. Divinations have revealed that Zotzilaha himself has grown angry over an idol of the bat god stolen from his shrine in the northern volcano Nextepeua ("He Who Rains Ashes"). The villagers have tried to appease Zotzilaha with offerings, but Zotzilaha's wrath grows. If the idol is not found and returned to the shrine, they believe that Nextepeua will erupt and destroy them all.

Zotzilaha Lore

Characters may make Knowledge (religion) or bardic knowledge checks to determine what they know of Zotzilaha. When a PC makes a skill check, the information below is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC	Result
20	Zotzilaha is the Olman god of bats and horrible things that fly in the night. He also holds influence over the Olman underworld, and is associated with diseases and plagues.
25	Zotzilaha is a regional name for the deity; he is known in other Olman settlements by the name Camazotz. Locally, Zotzilaha has increasingly taken on the fire aspect of another Olman god called Huhueteotl.
30	Zotzilaha is part man, part bat, and can manifest an aspect on the Material Plane when he is displeased. Only holy weapons may cause his aspect lasting harm, though nobody has ever dared try. His mere gaze strikes fear in his enemies.

PARASAUROLOPHUS **CR 7**

N Huge animal

DRAGON #318 67

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +14, Spot +11

AC 14, touch 8, flat-footed 14

hp 142 (14 HD)

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

Spd 40 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee slam +16 (1d8+12)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +26

Special Actions trample 1d8+12

Abilities Str 26, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes, Run, Skill Focus (Hide)

Skills Hide –5 (+5 in areas of heavy vegetation), Listen +14, Spot +11

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 25. The save DC is Strength-based.

Of course, the stolen idol is the same one the PCs recovered in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake." As detailed there, these events have been orchestrated by the demon queen of succubi, Malcanthet, who hopes to lure the PCs into a hidden treasury in the Zotzilaha shrine where they'll discover an item that will be of great value later in the campaign.

Revealing to the villagers that the PCs have the bat idol is best broached with tact, lest the villagers take the PCs for the thieves who stole it. With a DC 15 Diplomacy check or a promise to return the idol to the volcano, the PCs can calm J'kal; in any event, she promises them that if they return the idol to the shrine, she'll be more than willing to send her warriors to Farshore to defend it when the time comes.

The Tanaroans eagerly provide directions to the Zotzilaha shrine entrance on the lower slopes of Nextepeua. This entrance is a large cave mouth, its rim marked with bat carvings and numerous niches for offerings. Beyond this entrance, a winding tunnel bores deep into the volcano's core—the Olmans make the pilgrimage to the shrine chamber itself only once a year, and typically do so under the protection of *endure elements*. Temperatures in the tunnel are severe, rarely dipping below 110° F. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 303, for the effects of severe heat. The winding tunnel climbs three miles through the volcano before reaching the shrine, so a party moving at a speed of 30 feet can reach their goal in about an hour. During this journey, periodic tremors shake the volcano—nothing strong enough to knock people down, but enough to remind them that they are inside an active volcano.

Shrine of Zotzilaha (EL 14)

The sloping lava tunnel widens into a large round chamber filled with smoke and ash from fissures riddling the rock walls and floor. A fiery glow and thunderous rumble comes from the west, where rents in the cave wall open out directly into the active volcano's throat. The walls of the cave are riddled with niches, some of which contain offerings of food, trinkets, and animals, while others are empty or contain only ash. Through the haze, an eight-foot-tall bat leers from where it has been carved in relief out of the far wall. The bat's wings rise over its head, with its claws meeting at a curiously shaped niche that appears to be empty.

This shrine is where the Olmans visit every year to offer treasures and trinkets to placate Zotzilaha's anger—they believe that doing so is all that prevents a more destructive volcanic explosion. Only by the grace and divine sanctity of Zotzilaha does this shrine remain undestroyed during the volcano's periodic eruptions. The niches on the walls contain various offerings given to Zotzilaha by the natives over the past several years; none of them are particularly valuable. The niche in the large bat carving's claws once held the bat idol the PCs discovered in Tamoachan.

The idol was removed and placed in the path of the PCs as part of a convoluted scheme to ensure the PCs would come to this shrine and discover the secret treasure room beyond the sculpture. The mastermind is none other than Malcanthet, Demon Queen of Succubi, who sees the PCs as a means to an end. More about her schemes and other powers involved will be revealed in future installments of the Adventure Path.

Creature: Since the theft, an aspect of the bat god Zotzilaha has guarded this chamber against more indignities. The aspect spends much of its time cavorting in the searing inferno of the volcano's caldera, but always knows when creatures enter this cave, and arrives via one of the openings to the west only 1d4+2 rounds after the PCs arrive, accompanied by a flock of seven fire bats he has recently summoned.

Zotzilaha: hp 161; see page 58.

Fire Bats (7): hp 21; see page 43.

Tactics: The aspect fights to the death, pursuing foes from the volcano if necessar, returning to its shrine only if it perceives new intruders or if its prey flees more than a mile from the volcano's lowest slopes.

The aspect of Zotzilaha is brutal and violent, much like its divine source, yet it immediately ceases its attack if the PCs present it with the missing bat idol. It resumes its attack in four rounds unless someone replaces the bat idol in the niche on the northern wall. If the idol is returned, the aspect of Zotzilaha sighs in relief and relaxes, sending any remaining fire bat minions back into the volcano as it bows deeply to the party. In a grating baritone voice, the creature speaks in

halting Common: "Zotzilaha thanks you for returning his treasure. Know, mortals, that Zotzilaha rewards those who serve him. You may each choose something of value from his vault. If you have questions about a prize, you need but ask me. Choose quickly, for you must leave this place before I grow hungry..."

Treasure: The bat carving is in fact a cleverly hidden secret door that can be discovered with a DC 30 Search check. The door can be opened by a *knock* spell, the will of the aspect of Zotzilaha, or with a DC 30 Use Magic Device check; it does not open via conventional means. (Of course, methods like *passwall* or *dimension door* can also allow access to the chamber beyond.) When opened, the bat carving rumbles to life, lifting its wings to reveal an archway that leads into a ten-foot-square room beyond.

Any item of value offered to Zotzilaha is placed in this room rather than allowed to sit on display on an outer niche. Some of the treasures in this chamber date back hundreds of years. Each of the following constitutes one "choice."

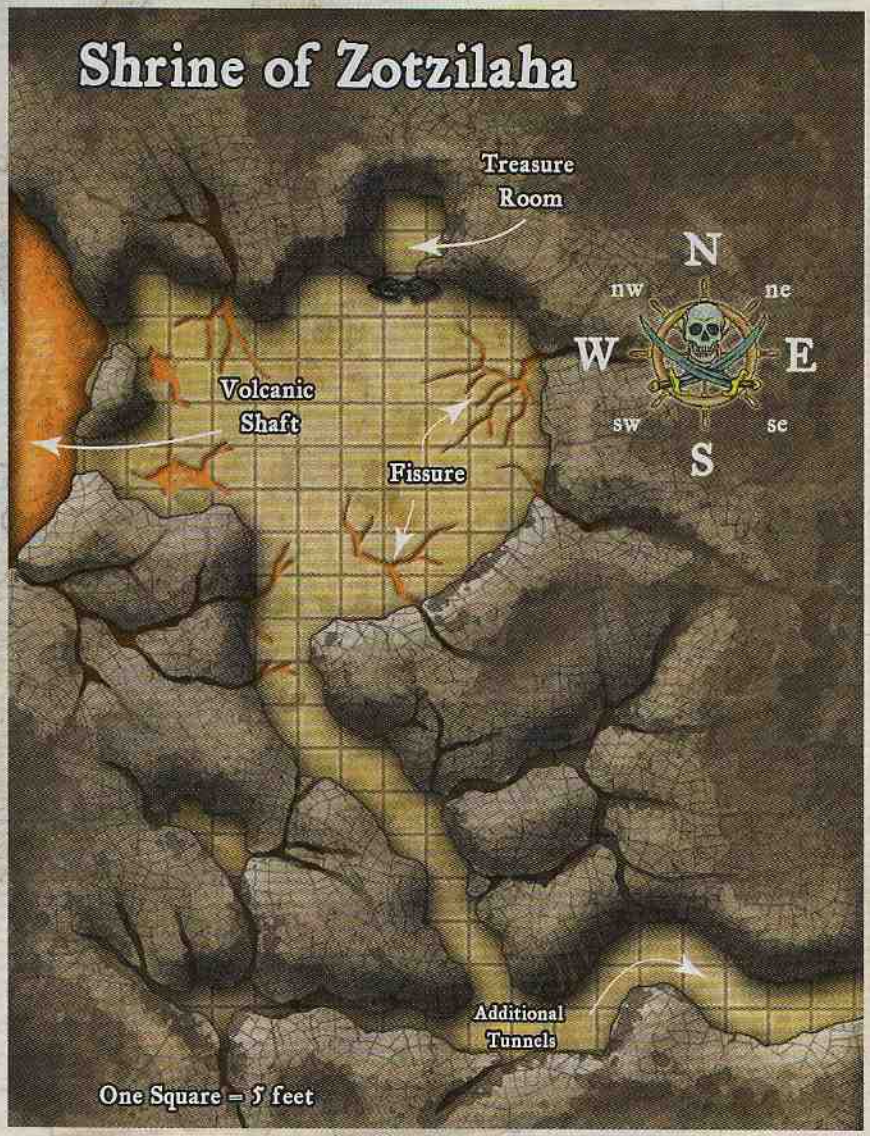
- a small wooden coffer containing 500 ancient platinum coins bearing a serpent on one side and a crown on the other
- an ivory carving of an elephant-headed humanoid gripping a tarnished scepter encrusted with jade, worth 3,000 gp in all
- a wooden carving of a tiger with two small sapphires for eyes worth 250 gp
- a necklace with a single dragon tooth worth 100 gp
- a masterwork buckler in the shape of the holy symbol of Olidammara
- a *+4 mithral breastplate*
- a *flame tongue longsword*
- a *ring of invisibility*
- a *pearl of power* (4th-level spell)
- a *stone of good luck*
- an *amulet of natural armor +3*
- a rolled up strip of leather containing a long, thin fang

Feel free to adjust the contents of the vault to more closely match the abilities and skills of your players, choosing from items worth 20,000 gp.

The aspect of Zotzilaha can reveal the magical properties of any item, if asked, but doesn't recognize the fang in the rolled-up strip of leather. It is not one of Zotzilaha's treasures, and doesn't count as a "choice" if the PCs wish to keep it. This fang is in fact a minor artifact known as the *Tooth of Ahazu* (see Appendix), one of the legendary *Teeth of Dahlver-Nar*. This item was placed here by an agent of Malcanthet, and it can aid the PCs greatly later on in the Savage Tide Adventure Path.

If the PCs attempt to take more than their share of treasure, the aspect of Zotzilaha roars and attacks, this time fighting to the death. If the aspect is defeated, taking any of the treasure angers Zotzilaha. Unlike the case of the bat idol, though, his attention is turned to this shrine when the PCs are here, so his wrath at any stolen treasures is more focused. Rather than manifesting as a possibly explosive volcano, any PC who steals more than his share from this chamber must make a DC 30 Will save; failure indicates his body twists and deforms in some horrible way, permanently reducing his highest ability score by six points. This curse is divine in nature, and quite difficult to remove as a result. The curse functions at CL 20th, and may only be removed via a caster of equal or higher level. If the stolen treasure is returned, any caster may remove it with *remove curse* or *break enchantment*.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs return the bat idol and don't take more than they are due from the vault, award



them XP as if they'd defeated the aspect of Zotzilaha in combat.

Victory Points: For returning the bat idol and securing the aid of the Olman tribes, the PCs gain 250 VP.

PART FOUR: A TRIP TO THE TAR PITS

The colonists of Farshore have made a few excursions to the Isle of Dread's immense tar pit before, but the journey has always been a harrowing and deadly one—it's far easier to simply trade with the Olmans for what tar the colonists need. Yet for the coming attack, Farshore needs a lot more tar than ever before. Obtaining a large supply to aid in repairing damage done to the colony by the first attack or to aid in repairing the *Sea Wyvern* would certainly go a long way toward defeating the Crimson Fleet assault.

To repair the *Sea Wyvern*, damage to the *Blue Nixie* and other ships in Farshore harbor, and the damage to the palisade and other buildings, the colonists must be able to transport the tar safely. A well-traveled footpath between Tanaroa and the tar pits exists, and the colonists can certainly use it to transport what is needed.

The problem lies with the fact that one of the isle's oldest and angriest dinosaurs has recently settled in the region.

Temauhti-tecuani (EL 11)

The villagers of Tanaroa have been unable to gather tar from the pits for several weeks, and are quick to warn anyone who indicates that they wish to do so as well. It seems that a grizzled tyrannosaurus (known locally as Temauhti-tecuani), has claimed the tar pits as his territory. The dinosaur has learned that it's easier to simply eat creatures that have become stuck in the tar, and views the entire thing as his banquet table now. Although the tar pits are large, the dinosaur is relentless in his patrols of his territory, and not long after anyone attempts to gather a significant amount of tar, the monster's arrival causes panic and mayhem. Before Farshore can gather the tar it needs, someone needs to deal with Temauhti-tecuani.

Creatures: The PCs won't need to look long to find the cantankerous dinosaur. Only 1d4 hours after they begin their patrol of the tar pits, the sound of enraged roars and strangely high-pitched shrieks of terror and pain tear through the air. Emerging from the jungle, the PCs witness Temauhti-tecuani's wrath firsthand.

The Olmans and the colonists aren't the only denizens of the Isle of Dread who use the tar pits. A native race of humanoids known as phanatons also make frequent trips to the pits to waterproof their roofs and walls. When the PCs arrive, a band of a dozen phanaton tar-gatherers have been challenged by Temauhti-tecuani, and the dinosaur is making short work of the diminutive creatures.

A phanaton resembles a cross between a raccoon and monkey. They possess long, prehensile tails and folds of skin between their arms and legs that allow them to glide for short distances. Temauhti-tecuani himself is a horribly scarred survivor of countless battles with the isle's other predators. One of his eyes is missing, and one of his arms ends in a jagged stump, bitten off long ago by another tyrannosaurus.

TEMAUHTI-TECUANI **CR 11**

Male elite advanced tyrannosaurus
N Huge animal
Monster Manual 61
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +21, Spot +21

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 337 (currently 320, 25 HD)
Fort +22, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

Spd 40 ft.
Melee* bite +17 (3d6+26/19–20)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +37
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, improved grab (bite)
Special Actions swallow whole
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 32, Dex 16, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Armor (4), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack
Skills Listen +21, Spot +21

PHANATON TAR-GATHERERS (12) **CR 1**

Male and female phanaton ranger 1
CG Small humanoid
DRAGON #339 62
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +3
Languages Phanaton, Olman

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 9 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Spd 20 ft.; gliding
Melee dagger +2 (1d3/19–20) or spear +2 (1d6/×3)
Ranged dagger +5 (1d3/19–20) or spear +5 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** –3
Atk Options favored enemy +2 (animal)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ forest awareness, wild empathy +0
Feats Stealthy, Track
Skills Climb +6, Hide +13, Jump +0, Listen +7, Move Silently +13 (+17 in forested areas), Spot +3, Survival +5
Possessions leather armor, dagger, spear

Forest Awareness (Ex) Phanatons gain a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws while in a forested location.
Gliding (Ex) A phanaton can glide, negating damage from a fall of any height and allowing 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent. Phanatons fly at a speed of 20 feet (average) while gliding, but can never hover (even if their maneuverability improves). A phanaton cannot glide while carrying a medium or heavy load, and falls if it becomes unconscious or helpless.

Tactics: Temauhti-tecuani is hungry and angry, and the PCs would make a better meal than the small phanatons. Once the dinosaur spots the PCs, he ignores the phanatons (who race for cover) and attacks them instead. Temauhti-tecuani is fantastically territorial, and doesn't know the meaning of retreat. The dinosaur fights to the death.

Once the PCs enter the fray, the panicked phanatons begin cheering, quickly joining the PCs in the battle by throwing their spears and daggers. They avoid engaging Temauhti-tecuani in melee, instead running around the battlefield to reclaim daggers and spears that miss to reuse them.

The tar pit presents an additional tactical wrinkle to the battle. There's a strip of open ground forty feet wide between the tar pit's edge and the jungle. The first five feet of tar pit is only a foot or two deep, but grows deeper quickly. A character moving through the tar pit within five feet from shore may do so by spending three squares of movement per square. In the deeper tar, a character must make DC 25 Swim checks to move through it. In addition, the tar is boiling hot, and inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage per round to anyone who moves through it. Someone immersed in tar takes 3d6 fire damage per round. Tar continues to burn for 1d6 rounds after a character emerges. Removing tar from a creature takes 1d6 consecutive full-round actions. Spells like *prestidigitation* can clean the tar off quickly.

Treasure: A search of the dead tyrannosaurus reveals hundreds of arrowheads, spearheads, and other projectile weapons embedded in scar tissue and thick patches of scales on the beast's hide. A DC 20 Search check reveals a *+1 keen cold iron kukri* lodged deep in the folds of scales on the dinosaur's right foot.

PTERANODON **CR 2**

N Medium animal
DRAGON #318 68
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +4, Spot +15

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12
hp 27 (5 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Spd 10 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
Melee bite +5 (1d6+3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options dive

Abilities Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 18, Cha 12
Feats Flyby Attack, Skill Focus (spot)
Skills Spot +15

Dive (Ex) If a pteranodon makes a charge attack and lowers its altitude by at least 30 feet as part of the charge, it gains a +4 bonus on its attack roll and deals 2d6+6 points of damage with its bite if it hits.

Victory Points: If the PCs defeat Temauhti-tecuani, the tar pits become safe to harvest. It'll take only 1d4 days for Farshore to gather all the tar necessary for repairs, at which point the PCs gain 100 VP.

Visiting the Phanatons

The phanaton tar-gatherers are among the bravest of their kind, but naturally shy. If the PCs aid them in fighting the tyrannosaurus and any of them survive, the phanatons gather in a small group to chatter and watch the PCs. If the PCs can establish communication with the phanatons, they thank them dozens of times for killing Temauhti-tecuani. The phanatons are initially friendly, and if they can be

made helpful with a DC 20 Diplomacy check, they ask the PCs to accompany them back to their village to the north.

The journey to the phanaton village from the tar pits is about 45 miles—it'll likely take the PCs a few days to reach it. During the journey, the phanatons grill the PCs ceaselessly for stories of their homeland. Their irrepressible curiosity extends to the PCs' gear, and while the phanatons aren't thieves, their habits of taking items that don't belong to them just to examine them for a few minutes before they return them might set some PCs on edge. As long as the PCs are patient (and as long as they can keep at least one phanaton alive during any wandering monster fights they have along the way), the arrival at the phanaton village is one of noisy excitement.

When word of the PCs' triumph over Temauhti-tecuani spreads, the phanatons become joyful and impressed. The PCs become the guests of honor during an impromptu feast of fruits and unusually tasty fried insects. Feel free to play out this feast as much as you like; during the feast, have the PCs make a DC 20 Diplomacy check to determine how the phanatons take to them. Alternately, a PC that wishes to entertain the phanatons can instead make a DC 20 Perform check. Success with either check indicates that the phanatons accept the PCs as tribe-friends, and are willing to trade with them or let the PCs stay in their village as honored guests. Characters who sleep in the village need fear no wandering monster encounters.

If the PCs explain Farshore's troubles to the phanatons, and if they've become tribe-friends of the village, the phanaton leader Teketek promises to send a group of his strongest hunters south to Farshore to do what they can to aid in the colony's defense.

The phanatons also know quite a bit about the Isle of Dread, and can give the PCs a fair amount of basic information about many of the locations indicated on the map of the isle. If asked for advice on where to look for more resources to aid them in the coming conflict with the Crimson Fleet, they're quick to point the PCs in the direction of the Temple of the Jaguar, explaining that the "cat people" who once lived there were very warlike. They're gone now, but their weapons might remain hidden in the ruins of their village somewhere.

Note that the PCs could contact the phanatons before visiting the tar pit. In this case, the phanatons react warily to the strange visitors and make a proposition. If the PCs can make the tar pits safe for harvesting by defeating

Temauhti-tecuani, the phanatons promise to aid them as well.

Victory Points: Securing phanaton aid for the battle earns 200 VP.

PART FIVE: TEMPLE OF THE JAGUAR

At the height of Thanaclan's power, some folk abandoned the comforts of urban living for a more traditional lifestyle in the wild. The most prolific of these groups were several cults of shamanistic shapeshifters who embraced the ancient ways and became lycanthropes. Few of these groups were as successful as the Cult of the Jaguar. When Thanaclan fell to the savage tide, these cults were sheltered from the apocalypse and managed to live on for several generations. In time, most of them died out as well, victims of the savage new predators that had clamed the isle. Alone among them, the Cult of the Jaguar survived. Over the generations, these werejaguars developed and changed, becoming an entirely new race of creatures known as rakastas.

Unfortunately, the Isle of Dread is an unforgiving place, and the last known rakasta tribe on the isle recently fell victim to raiders from the central plateau—ironically, members of the Cult of the Jaguar who had not escaped the initial savage tide and had, over the last 1,000 years, developed into a much more destructive race of fiendish catfolk. Normally confined to the central plateau, these cultists became creatures called skinwalkers, and their periodic forays into the lowlands to war against their distant cousins came to a bitter (for the lowlanders) end as recently as a few years ago. There may still be small groups of rakastas dwelling in hidden reaches of the Isle of Dread, and it's certain that some escaped the isle entirely to settle on distant shores, but as an organized nation, the rakastas are now a dwindling memory.

The skinwalkers make no appearances in this adventure, but become a primary foe in "City of Broken Idols," the seventh Savage Tide adventure. Additional details will appear in *Dungeon* Magazine #145.

Although the rakastas are gone, their works remain. Hidden south of the great plateau is an abandoned village of huts that have nearly been reclaimed by the jungle. Looming nearby is an ancient temple where the rakastas once performed their sacred rites. Now overgrown with vegetation, the temple houses a fantastic cache of weapons the rakastas had stockpiled in anticipation of the skinwalker attack on their tribe. They were unable to reach the stockpile when the surprise attack finally came, and now these weapons may spell the difference between success and failure in the coming conflict with the Crimson Fleet.

Finding the Temple

Although the PCs learn of the rumor of a rakasta weapons cache early on in this adventure, actually locating the site of their temple is more problematic. The Farshore colonists know nothing of the rakastas. The Olmans know more, and observe that while they've not encountered any of the catfolk recently, they were most often encountered in the jungles northwest of Bloodwater Lake. The phanatons used to trade with the rakastas, and if befriended, they can easily mark the location of the rakasta temple on a map. Of course, the PCs could also simply decide to explore the jungle on their own. Each day spent within five miles of the Temple of the Jaguar, allow the character in the party with the highest Survival check to attempt a DC 30 Survival check; other characters can aid this roll. Success indicates that the PCs stumble upon the overgrown rakasta village and its stony temple.

1. Temple Entrance (EL 10)

A squat ziggurat crouches here, embraced in the green of the jungle. Tall niches along its walls hold moss-covered statues of men with jaguar heads. A natural curtain of thick vines and creepers hangs over a wide opening at the base of the southern wall.

A DC 25 Search of the temple's perimeter reveals signs of battle; statues with deep gouges, strange bones of catlike humanoids, and other telltale remnants of the skinwalker assault on the last rakasta tribe several years ago. The skinwalkers did not enter the temple itself—they saw no need, as they had slaughtered the rakastas to a man.

Creature: A huge green anaconda clambered up above the entrance to the pyramid several days ago to digest a meal. The enormous snake has recently wakened from its torpor, and remains hidden until anyone attempts to enter the pyramid, at which point it strikes.

Emerald Anaconda **CR 10**

Advanced elite giant constrictor snake
N Gargantuan animal
Monster Manual 280
Init +4; **Senses** scent; Listen +14, Spot +14

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 14
hp 230 (20 HD)
Fort +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +6

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee bite +25 (3d6+21)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +41
Atk Options improved grab (bite), constrict 2d6+21

Abilities Str 38, Dex 19, Con 22, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 4
Feats Alertness, Endurance, Diehard, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Skill Focus (Hide), Stealthy
Skills Balance +12, Climb +22, Hide +8, Listen +14, Move Silently +6, Spot +14, Swim +22

Tactics: The anaconda attacks the first creature to attempt to enter the temple from its ledge ten feet above. While constricting one foe, it continues to defend itself from other attacks, but it drops its prey and flees if reduced to less than 75 hit points.

2. The Jade Jaguar (EL 6)

Shafts of light from broken portions of wall and ceiling thirty feet above illuminate this large open chamber within the crumbling pyramid. The walls are covered with faded murals and bas-relief carvings, while the center of the room is filled with a variety of antique totemic statues facing a central platform supporting a large jade figurine of a jaguar—these statues seem curiously untouched by the passage of

Tonatiuh

time, and retain the finest lines of detail, as if the unknown sculptor had finished the job only yesterday.

The statues that surround the central platform depict gorillas, snakes, crocodiles, bats, tigers, and other wild animals in positions of rage and territorial defense. The entire central array of statues and pillar are in fact a *permanent illusion* (CL 15th) intended to lure would-be thieves into a trap.

Trap: A fifteen-foot-wide, fifty-foot-deep pit is hidden by the illusory pillar—anyone who attempts to climb onto the pillar to examine the (also illusory) jade jaguar must make a DC 25 Reflex save to avoid tumbling through the illusion into the pit below. Success indicates that the character catches himself as his hand or foot passes through the pillar (also granting a DC 17 Will save to disbelieve the *permanent illusion*). Carved into the pit's northern wall are niches, forming a ladder that descends to a narrow ledge leading to area 3 of the temple.

The bottom five feet of the pit is filled with brackish, tainted water, enough to expose anyone who falls into it to blinding sickness but not enough to cushion a fall. The pit walls within 20 feet of the water's surface are slippery (DC 25 Climb check), but above that they're dry (DC 20 Climb check).

Pit Trap: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger, automatic reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); tainted water (blinding sickness, Fort DC 16, 1d3 day incubation, 1d4 Str plus blindness); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

3. Tunnel Statuary

A gently sloping tunnel winds downward into darkness. The walls of the tunnel are riddled with niches filled with ancient statues of jaguars looking down from their perches. Their eyes glitter with red, blue, and green gemstones.

Treasure: The niches hold a total of 20 jaguar statues, each weighing approximately 50 pounds and worth 150 gp apiece. The 40 gemstone eyes are each lapis lazulis worth 10 gp apiece.

4. The Great Jaguar (EL 10)

Flickering torches in bamboo sconces light this tall chamber. The walls are adorned with murals of armored men and women with the heads of cats fighting against troglodytes, dinosaurs, and other, less-identifiable demonic monsters. In some scenes, the catfolk ride large saber-toothed tigers, while in others they worship at large pyramids. Ancient pillars carved in leafy patterns support the twenty-foot-high ceiling and surround a bamboo platform covered in reed mats.

This inner sanctum is where the rakastas came to offer prayers to their ancestors and perform sacred rites. The four everburning torches provide the ambient (and perpetual) light.

Creature: Before the savage tide struck down Thanaclan, the wilds around the region were the purvey of creatures sacred to the Olmans—couatls. These feathered serpents were viewed as oracles, advisors, and defenders of the wild. When the savage tide struck, the couatls were spared due to their natures (outsiders are immune to the effects of a savage tide), but could do little to help the Olmans. They became bastions of good in the savage new realm, but over time their numbers on the Isle of Dread have dwindled dramatically. Some fled to other planes, most have been slain by demons. Yet a few, like Tonatiuh, the guardian of this chamber, remain on the isle out of a sense of duty to history.

Tonatiuh deeply regrets the loss of his rakasta allies, even though he only appeared to the tribe's religious leaders. When the skinwalkers struck, Tonatiuh did what he could to defend them but was forced to flee in the end, an act that has wracked the couatl with guilt ever since. He emerges now only to hunt for food, and spends much of the rest of his time asleep atop the central pillar of this room. If he hears the PCs approach, he becomes invisible and uses *detect thoughts* to study them before revealing himself.

Tonatiuh does not initiate combat, but fights to the death to protect this temple from intruders. Although Tonatiuh is lawful good, he's suspicious of intruders as long as there's a possibility they may be allied with the skinwalkers of the City of Broken Idols. The couatl's initial

attitude toward the PCs depends on their alignment. Normally, his attitude is indifferent. If Tonatiuh cannot determine all of the PCs' alignments, he assumes the worst and his initial attitude is unfriendly; likewise, if there are no good characters in the group, he is unfriendly. If there are any evil characters in the group, his initial attitude is hostile. And if everyone in the group is lawful good, his initial attitude is helpful.

Only if the PCs can befriend Tonatiuh and adjust his attitude to friendly does the couatl revealthat his rakasta "children" were recently slaughtered by demonic humanoids known as skinwalkers from the central plateau. He goes on to say that the rakastas knew the attack was coming, and spent many years crafting and stockpiling magic weapons to fight the skinwalkers, but when the attack finally came it was swift and without warning. The rakasta didn't have a chance to get to the cache of weapons hidden in this room.

If told about the situation with the Crimson Fleet, and as long as he's been made friendly, Tonatiuh shows the PCs how to open the hidden cache under the central platform, and allows them to take what they wish from the stockpile within. He regretfully informs the PCs that he cannot help them in the battle—he has decided he must return to the outer planes to seek atonement for his failure. Once the weapon cache is gone from this place, he sees no further reason to remain on the Material Plane. He does grant a boon to the party before leaving, giving them three brightly colored feathers from his tail. If one of these feathers is used as an additional material component in casting *planar ally* to call Tonatiuh for aid, the spell costs no XP to cast.

Tonatiuh, couatl: hp 58; *Monster Manual* 37.

Tactics: If forced to fight, Tonatiuh makes liberal use of *charm monster* and *scorching ray*, avoiding melee until the odds are one-on-one. One of his favorite tactics is to use his *plane shift* spell-like ability to cast intruders into outer planes better suited to their alignment. He does not attempt to slay those who he successfully renders unconscious, and is quick to accept surrender. Still wracked with guilt over his perceived failure to defend the rakastas, Tonatiuh does not flee any conflict here.

Treasure: A DC 30 search of the central platform's north side reveals a hidden button; pressing it causes the entire platform to rise out of the ground, revealing a hollow region within the rising pillar filled with racks of weapons. The rakastas were masters of weaponcraft, and these weapons represent the pinnacle of their art. The weapons include 40 masterwork war claws (spiked gauntlets fashioned to look like tiger claws), 20 masterwork longbows, 600 arrows, 10 masterwork shortspears, 10 masterwork longspears, and 30 masterwork javelins. Additionally, three potent magic weapons are stored here as well, each resting on a low plinth in the center of the vault. These include a *+1 wounding war claw*, a *+2 evil outsider bane longbow*, and a *+1 holy greatsword*.

Victory Points: Delivering the masterwork weapons to Farshore earns 200 VP.

PART SIX: RECLAIMING THE WYVERN

The kopru are a race of amphibious monsters that have long dwelt in the submerged caverns below the Isle of Dread—they have been the isle's true masters for much of the last 1,000 years. While the next adventure, "The Lightless Depths," delves into the kopru's underground empire in detail, not all of the kopru adhere to the same beliefs. There are outcasts among their kind, members who seek other ways to exert their evil and need for domination. One such outcast is the druid Skephilipika, a kopru who has become obsessed with the savage ecology of the island's surface regions and believes that in these regions lie the secrets for true power. His beliefs were at odds with the rest of his kin, and so Skephilipika left the eldritch city deep below for the waters above.

After the PCs abandoned their ship *Sea Wyvern* at the start of "Here There Be Monsters," the wreck didn't remain uninhabited for long. At about the time the PCs started this adventure, Skephilipika claimed the wreck as his new home. He and his elasmosaurus animal companion have dwelt here ever since.

The Wrecked Wyvern (EL 10)

The *Sea Wyvern* sits on the reef just offshore from the northeastern coast of the Isle of Dread, just as the PCs left her. Lavinia recommends that the PCs use the *Blue Nixie* to reach the site rather than travel overland, but also recommends that they scout out the site before they attempt repairs or expose the *Blue Nixie*'s crew to possible peril—shipwrecks tend to be quickly inhabited by dangerous monsters, and it's been some time since the *Wyvern* arrived. Who knows what might dwell in its hold now?

Creatures: Skephilipika spends much of his time in the submerged aft section of the *Sea Wyvern*, and of late has been focused on creating a *periapt of Wisdom +4*, a task that has consumed the kopru's waking moments for days. While he works, his elasmosaurus animal companion Bloodtooth patrols the surrounding waters. If Bloodtooth notices the approach of a ship or other intruders, she quickly alerts her master and joins him in the defense of his new home.

A kopru is only humanoid from the torso up. It's lower body is serpentine, with a tail consisting of three powerful flukes, each ending in a cruel hook. The creature's taloned hands are webbed, and its head is that of a horrible large-eyed fish with facial tentacles surrounding a pucker-like maw filled with tiny sharp teeth.

SKEPHILIPIKA **CR 10**

Male kopru druid 8

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Monster Manual II 134

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages Aquan, Olman

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16

hp 104 (16 HD)

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15; resist nature's lure
Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee tail slap +18 (1d6+4) and
2 claws +16 (1d4+2) and
bite +16 (1d4+2) or
flame blade +17/+12/+7 touch (1d8+6 fire) and
tail slap +16 (1d6+2) and
claws +16 (1d4+2) and
bite +16 (1d4+2)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +24
Atk Options improved grab (tail slap), constrict (3d6+4)
Special Actions dominate person, wild shape 3/day (Large)
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 12th)
4th—*dispel magic, freedom of movement*
3rd—*call lightning* (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *poison* (DC 16)
2nd—*barkskin, flame blade, bear's endurance, resist energy*
1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *entangle, longstrider, speak with animals*
0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic, know direction, read magic, resistance*
Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 14
SQ amphibious, trackless step, wild empathy +10, woodland stride
Feats Ability Focus (dominate person), Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Natural Spell, Practiced Spellcaster (+4 to druid caster level)
Skills Concentration +21, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Spot +12, Survival +6, Swim +11
Possessions *ring of protection +2, amulet of mighty fists +1, dusty rose prism ioun stone,* necklace of pearls and shark teeth worth 350 gp

Dominate Person (Su) Once per day, a kopru can produce an effect like that of a *dominate person* spell (CL 10th, DC 16 negates) to a range of 180 feet. This effect lasts for 8 days. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) A kopru has a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks. If a kopru hits an opponent its size or smaller with a tail attack, it can attempt to grapple the foe as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it constricts its foe.

Bloodtooth, elasmosaurus animal companion: hp 111; *Monster Manual* 60.

Tactics: Skephilipika casts *freedom of movement, barkskin,* and *bear's endurance* prior to combat if possible. He then casts *speak with animals* in preparation for spontaneous *summon nature's ally* spells. If the PCs approach in the water, Skephilipika prefers to summon Huge or Large sharks. If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, Skephilipika wildshapes into a squid and jets out to sea to escape, leaving Bloodtooth to cover his flight. The elasmosaurus fights to the death. If he escapes, Skephilipika calls a new elasmosaurus animal companion the next day, and then returns to the wreck site to attack the PCs again as they attempt repairs.

Repairing the Sea Wyvern

The *Sea Wyvern* is significantly damaged, but rests high enough on the reef that it is effectively drydocked except during high tide. As long as the PCs have secured the tar pits and brought along enough repair

materials in the *Blue Nixie*, their ship can be repaired with some work.

The *Sea Wyvern* took a beating during the storm that wrecked her, and over the past several weeks she's been slowly falling to pieces. Of her 24 hull sections, 9 are completely destroyed. Additionally, all three of her rigging sections are destroyed. These 12 sections must be repaired before the ship can be sailed again. Repairing a hull section requires a day of work and a successful DC 20 Craft (carpentry) check—up to three sections may be worked on in a day. Use of spells like *wood shape* and *make whole* grant a +5 circumstance bonus on these repair checks. If none of the PCs is an accomplished carpenter, they can bring along an NPC ally like Amella Venkalie (Craft [carpentry] +7) or Dranys Sellis from Sellis' Woodworks and Smithy (Craft [carpentry] +9) to aid in repairs. Remember to check for wandering monsters each day; if an encounter occurs, it is an aquatic encounter 50% of the time, otherwise it's a jungle encounter as a creature stumbles onto the beach just 60 feet from the wrecked ship.

Once all 12 sections are repaired, it's simply a matter of waiting for high tide, whereupon the *Sea Wyvern* is lifted off the reef and can finally complete her journey to Farshore.

Victory Points: Repairing the Sea Wyvern earns the PCs 200 VP.

PART SEVEN: CRIMSON SUNSET

The PCs have about two months to prepare for the Crimson Fleet; once this time has passed, the characters would be well-advised to stay close to Farshore, so they'll be there to aid in its defense. Lavinia employs several small and fast fishing boats to patrol the waters surrounding the southern islands. The Crimson Fleet has neither the desire nor the capability to hide its advance with magic, instead opting for a more menacing approach. The scouts return to Farshore with news of the approaching fleet approximately two months after this adventure begins. Once the scouts make this report, the colony has only a couple of hours to prepare. If the PCs are on the other side of the Isle of Dread at this point, they may well miss the entire attack. Not only does this mean that they miss out on the opportunity to earn additional Victory Points during the battle, but their absence itself imparts a penalty of –400 Victory Points to their total. If the PCs have done well in preparing for the attack, they may still have enough that Farshore can survive the attack, but the battle will be close indeed.

The attacking fleet consists of five caravels (*The Hag*, *Sea Witch's Curse*, *The Kraken*, the *Stygian Shark*, and the flagship—the *Brine Harlot*), each with a full compliment of bloodthirsty pirates itching for a fight. Vanthus himself, now transformed by the leaders of the Crimson Fleet into a half-fiend, captains the *Brine Harlot*.

Each ship boasts a crew of thirty pirates, but you don't need to run a full-scale battle between 150 pirates and 240 colonists. The battle's resolution is instead determined by a combination of what the PCs and the colonists have done to prepare for the battle, and what "mini-missions" the PCs accomplish during the battle. Once the scouts return to report on the approaching fleet, find out from the players how they plan to aid the colonists during the conflict. Use their responses to decide which of the encounters below take place during the battle. Their success or failure in each determines the final total of Victory Points earned during the adventure, and thus the outcome of the battle (see Concluding the Adventure).

The Fleet's Attack Plan

The Crimson Fleet attack comes in four waves. When the five ships first arrive in the harbor, they launch their attack with catapults and ballistae. Longboats of pirates swarm the beaches and docks of Farshore. A group of flesh golems controlled by the yuan-ti V'sesslin joins the battle on the shore at this time.

The Crimson Fleet then pushes deep into Farshore, driving back the defenders to higher ground. The yuan-ti V'sesslin launches *fireball* after *fireball* into the colony. As the colonists make a desperate attempt to repel the pirates, Vanthus releases a flight of vrocks into the streets of Farshore. Finally the pirates make a last push, this time with Vanthus Vanderboren himself at the lead of the assault. Vanthus confronts Lavinia, and without the PCs aid, he may well murder their patron.

The following several encounters represent key battlefield events the PCs can tackle to aid in Farshore's defense.

Fighting Pirates (EL 9, VP 25)

Creatures: At the start of the battle, the PCs have a chance to fight a group of six pirates on their own. These pirates could be attempting to set fire to a building, chasing defenseless colonists, or simply prowling the streets looking for a fight.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (6) **CR 4**
Male human fighter 2/rogue 2
CE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
hp 30 (4 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +7 (1d6+2/18–20) or mwk rapier +5 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (dagger)
Skills Balance +9, Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +7, Tumble +7
Possessions masterwork studded leather, masterwork rapier, masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, 50 gp in jewelry and coin

Amphibious Assault (EL 11, VP 100)

Creatures: The Crimson Fleet brought along four flesh golems stitched together from the parts of disobedient crewmen to aid in the assault. A yuan-ti sorcerer named V'sesslin is the creator of these four golems—defeating him and his kin is the focus of this battlefield event.

Before the battle begins, V'sesslin orders his four flesh golems to leap into Farshore Harbor and walk due southeast until they

STEGOSAURUS **CR 10**

N Huge animal

DRAGON #318 68

Init –2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +26, Spot +3

AC 21, touch 6, flat-footed 21; dorsal plates

hp 250 (20 HD)

Fort +21, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

Spd 30 ft.

Melee tail slam +24 (2d6+16/19–20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +34

Atk Options toss

Abilities Str 32, Dex 6, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (tail slam), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Iron Will, Run, Weapon Focus (tail slam)

Skills Listen +26, Spot +3

Dorsal Plates (Ex) As a move action, a stegosaurus can lower its body to place its dorsal plates between it and a single creature. This grants the stegosaurus a +4 armor bonus to its Armor Class against the chosen creature. Additionally, if the chosen creature attacks the stegosaurus with a light weapon or natural weapon, the sharp dorsal plates inflict 1d10 points of slashing damage (DC 18 Reflex half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Toss (Ex) A creature that is at least two sizes smaller than the stegosaurus that is hit by its tail slam must make a DC 31 Reflex save or be thrown 30 feet in a random direction away from the stegosaurus. The creature takes 1d6 points of damage from being tossed, plus an additional 1d6 points of damage if it strikes a solid object before it travels the full distance. The tossed creature is prone when it lands. The save DC is Strength-based.

reach land, at which point they are to dismantle any buildings they encounter. The golems' emergence from the waves causes swift panic as the defenders quickly realize that their weapons are doing little damage to them. The PCs must intervene and destroy the four golems before they can tear apart the colony's buildings and defenses.

Flesh Golems (4): hp 79 each; *Monster Manual* 135.

Take Out the Snakes (EL 11, VP 100 or 200)

Creatures: The majority of the Crimson Fleet's assault force are infantry—pirates who swarm the beaches and attack anyone they meet. A few remain behind on the ships to man the catapults and ballistae, but on the *Stygian Shark*, another menace altogether has come to Farshore.

A yuan-ti pureblood sorcerer named V'sesslin has hired the services of himself and his three halfblood bodyguards to the *Stygian Shark* for this mission. V'sesslin belongs to a yuan-ti slaver ring based in Scuttlecove, and hopes that by offering his services to the Crimson Fleet for this mission he can cement a stronger alliance between their two organizations.

V'sesslin and his guards remain on the *Stygian Shark* (which is anchored only 30 feet off shore) and provide what amounts to artillery support. The yuan-ti readies his *wand of enlarged fireballs*, and whenever one of the pirates on land activates a red-tinged smokestick, V'sesslin fires a fireball into the targeted area one round later (in theory, giving the pirate who gave the signal time to get out of the blast radius). In this manner, V'sesslin targets buildings, large groups of colonists, and other key areas. Taking him out removes a potent force from the fleet's offense.

If the PCs defeat the yuan-ti, they can gain an additional 100 Victory Points by scuttling the *Stygian Shark*.

V'SESSLIN **CR 10**

Male yuan-ti pureblood sorcerer 9

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Monster Manual 263

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13

hp 66 (80 with *false life*, 13 HD)

SR 23

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *shock dagger* +8/+3 (1d4 plus 1d6 electrical)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +7

Special Actions *alternate form*

Combat Gear *wand of enlarged fireballs* (38 charges)

Spells Known (CL 9th, +11 ranged touch)

4th (5/day)—*animate dead, enervation*

3rd (7/day)—*fly, haste, lightning bolt* (DC 19)

2nd (8/day)—*bull's strength, false life, mirror image, scorching ray*

1st (8/day)—*animate rope, charm person* (DC 17), *identify, mage armor, shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

1/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *cause fear* (DC 17), *darkness, entangle* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 22

SQ *detect poison*, summon familiar (Tiny viper named Zarlian)

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +16, Concentration +18, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +3, Spellcraft +12, Spot +10

Possessions combat gear, *+1 shock dagger, cloak of Charisma +4*

Yuan-Ti Halfbloods (3): hp 38 each; *Monster Manual* 264.

Scuttle a Ship (EL 10, VP 100 per ship)

Creatures: The five Crimson Fleet ships not only provide artillery support with their ballistae, but serve as a symbol for the pirates. Scuttling one of these ships can severely damage the pirates' morale. In order to sink a Crimson Fleet ship outright, the PCs must either engage it with their own ship or use powerful magic. In this case, you should refer to *Stormwrack* for rules on naval combat.

Alternately, the PCs could simply board one of the five ships and attack the skeleton crew left behind to defend it. On the *Stygian Shark*, this crew consists of the four

yuan-ti detailed in the previous encounter. On each of the other ships, a group of seven Crimson Fleet pirates await the PCs; if they can be defeated, their ship is rendered helpless. It's a simple matter to burn the flag, set fire to the ship, set it adrift into the rocks, or otherwise scuttle a ship once it's undefended.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (7): hp 30 each; see page 53.

Kill the Vrocks (EL 12, VP 150)

Before the battle began, Vanthus was contacted by the Crimson Fleet via a *crystal ball* with *telepathy*. His report of the failure of the Rat's End pirates and what appears to be some fortifications and greater-than-anticipated defenses at Farshore encouraged the Fleet to send a little more help, and three vrocks called up from the Abyss were allowed to peer into the *crystal ball* and then *greater teleport* to Vanthus' side.

Vanthus keeps the vrocks a secret for most of the battle, ordering them to teleport into Farshore once the battle reaches its height. The demons appear with a shriek and immediately attempt to summon more vrocks before turning to the task of killing as many colonists as they can. Once battle begins, three of the vrocks begin a dance of ruin; if one of them is stunned, paralyzed, or slain, the remaining vrocks focus their wrath on the one foolish enough to disrupt their dance. The vrocks are bound by powerful magic, and do not try to flee—they fight to the death.

Vrocks (3): hp 115 each; *Monster Manual* 48.

A Family Matter (EL 14, VP 300)

As the battle for Farshore draws to a close, the outcome should be fairly apparent. If the PCs have amassed enough Victory Points already, the pirates may be in a fighting retreat or even a full rout. Alternately, the pirates might have captured most of the colony, forcing the defenders into the smaller complex surrounding the two manor houses. In any event, the last battle of the assault is as personal as it is deadly, for Vanthus finally chooses to reveal himself to the PCs and his sister Lavinia.

Creature: Vanthus has changed since the PCs last encountered him at the start of this campaign—as a reward for his services to the Crimson Fleet, he has been transformed into a specific breed of half-fiend known as a lemorian. A look of horrified recognition crosses Lavinia's face as she recognizes her brother. She cries out his name in shock as he swoops down from the sky to land nearby.

Vanthus's low profile during the battle is engineered so that he'll have the advantage of shock and surprise when he reveals himself—his unhealthy obsession with his sister has only magnified during the months after his transformation, and once he discovered she was here on Farshore, his primary goal became her abduction.

Vanthus Vanderboren **CR 14**

Male lemorian aristocrat 1/rogue 5/fighter4/tempest 2

CE Medium outsider (native)

Monster Manual 148, *Complete Adventurer* 81

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages Common

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge

hp 106 (12 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune poison

Vanthus Vanderboren

Victory Points

Listed here are all possible Victory Points attainable in this adventure or in the accompanying Farshore article.

Condition	VP Award
Upgrade harbor	50 VP
Upgrade palisade	50 VP
Upgrade watchtowers	50 VP ea. (100 max)
Cast *hallow* on cemetery	25 VP
Defeat troglodyte tribe	25 VP
Recruit additional militia	25 VP ea. (100 max)
Meravanchi is lord mayor	–250 VP
Vanderboren is lord mayor	150 VP
Aid at Farshore Chapel	25 VP ea. (200 max)
Fix infirmary's efficiency	50 VP
Each Jade Raven slain	–100 VP
Recruit dinosaurs	2 VP/CR (200 max)
Secure aid of Olman tribes	250 VP
Defeat Temauhti-techuani	100 VP
Secure phanaton aid	200 VP
Deliver rakasta weapons	200 VP
Repair the *Sea Wyvern*	200 VP
Fighting Pirates	25 VP ea. (75 max)
Amphibious Assault	100 VP
Take Out the Snakes	100 VP
Scuttle a Ship	100 VP ea. (500 max)
Kill the Vrocks	150 VP
Defeat Vanthus	300 VP
PCs miss final battle	–400 VP
Savage tide hits Farshore	–2000 VP

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 22

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee +3 *longsword* +16 (1d8+8/19–20) or +3 *longsword* +15/+10 (1d8+8/19–20) and +1 *keen sickle* +12/+8 (1d6+2/19–20) and tail +8 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Spring Attack, smite good 1/day (+12 damage), sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 18), *command* (DC 15)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 19), *fear* (DC 18), *mass suggestion* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 21, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 18

SQ ambidexterity, tempest defense +1, trapfinding, trap sense +1

Feats Dodge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting , Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Balance +11, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +7, Forgery +10, Intimidate +18, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +8, Swim +6, Tumble +17

Possessions +3 *mithral shirt*, +3 *longsword*, +1 *keen sickle*, masterwork dagger, *ring of protection +2*, *amulet of health +2*, *boots of speed*, *shadow pearl*, 4 gold earrings worth 300 gp each

Ambidexterity (Ex) Vanthus's penalties for dual-wielding weapons are lessened by 1 when he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Vanthus can poison a melee weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tempest Defense (Ex) When wielding two weapons, Vanthus gains a +1 bonus to his Armor Class as long as he's not wearing medium or heavy armor.

Tactics: When Vanthus arrives, he greets the PCs with a sneer, then demands that Lavinia join him. If she agrees, he promises to leave Farshore in peace. Of course, he has no real intent of doing so, and Lavinia knows it, replying to his "invitation" with a curse, telling him her brother died the same night their parents did—the mockery standing before her now is nothing but filth wearing his skin like some monstrous parasite.

Vanthus does not take this well, and attempts to dominate her—with the Jade Ravens locked in combat with other pirates, it falls to the PCs to intervene and protect Lavinia from her demonic brother.

Vanthus uses his flight to stay at range at the start of a battle, using his spell-like abilities to cause chaos among the PCs. He uses *suggestion* to try to make the PCs abandon Lavinia to go aid the other colonists against the pirates, or to get them to fight him "like men" by casting aside their weapons and armor to fight unarmed and unarmored. After a few rounds of this, Vanthus loses his patience and swoops in to attack in melee, activating his *boots of speed* as he does so.

Although Vanthus does not flee, he does have one last trick if faced with defeat. Once he's brought below 10 hit points, he glares at the nearest PC, reaches into a pouch, and pulls out something he managed to steal from his superiors before he left Scuttlecove—a bloodstained *shadow pearl*.

The PCs have seen what a *shadow pearl* can do during "The Bullywug Gambit." To activate the pearl, Vanthus must retrieve it from his pouch (a move equivalent action that provokes an attack of opportunity) and anoint it with blood (also a move equivalent action). He then drops the pearl on the ground (a free action), whereupon it cracks open and activates. If a character is within five feet of Vanthus when he drops the pearl, the character can attempt to catch it before it falls by making a DC 20 Reflex save, but doing so provokes an attack of opportunity from Vanthus. If the PC makes the save and isn't slain or knocked out by Vanthus's attack of opportunity, he prevents the pearl's activation. As long as he holds it, though, Vanthus can activate it by successfully sundering the held pearl.

If the pearl is activated, it shatters and unleashes a cloud of choking green gas in a 20-foot spread. Any creature in this area takes 1d6 points of acid damage per round. The crushed pearl smokes and sputters in this manner for one minute before exploding into a one-mile-radius tide of green energy. All corporeal aberrations, animals, dragons, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, and monstrous humanoids in this area must make a DC 15 Will save. Success indicates the creature is nauseated for one round, but failure indicates the savage tide washes away the victim's sanity and transforms him into a savage creature. See DUNGEON #140 for details on this template, but if it comes to this, Farshore is likely doomed. In any event, if the savage tide engulfs Farshore, the PCs suffer a –2,000 Victory Point penalty.

Once activated, the PCs have a minute to deal with the *shadow pearl*. Its effects function at Caster Level 20th; if the magic can be dispelled, the savage tide is averted. Placing the activated pearl in an antimagic zone until the minute

passes also prevents the savage tide. Otherwise, the only real option may be to use magic to transport the *shadow pearl* to a relatively uninhabited area so that when it detonates, the savage tide doesn't affect as many souls.

If the activated pearl is put into an object that can withstand its acidic vapors (such as a *bag of holding*, a *bead of force* sphere, or even just a strong container), the savage tide can be effectively contained. The blast of savage energy dissipates quickly once the pearl explodes, and only a round later, all that remains are the nonmagical fragments of a large black pearl.

Although Vanthus' death doesn't necessarily ensure victory for the PCs, it does signal the end of the assault on Farshore, one way or another.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Vanthus's defeat, the Crimson Fleet pirates either flee for their lives or begin the task of pillaging the colony. At this time, add up all of the Victory Points the PCs have earned to determine their success or failure.

2,400 or more Victory Points (Triumph)

The Crimson Fleet pirates are destroyed with minimal damage or loss of life to Farshore and its allies. All non-scuttled Crimson Fleet ships are claimed as the property of Farshore, and word of the defeat, when it reaches Scuttlecove, convinces the Crimson Fleet to leave Farshore alone. Increase Farshore's assets by 20,000 gp. Each PC gains a share of 5,000 gp of the loot (a character that forgoes this award can increase Farshore's assets by this amount). Award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated a CR 13 creature.

1,400—2,399 Victory Points (Victory)

The Crimson Fleet pirates are defeated with moderate damage and loss of life to Farshore and its allies. 1d4 unscuttled enemy ships are captured and taken as prizes, but the remainder escape. No named NPC allies are slain, but Farshore's population is reduced to 2d20+190. Increase Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp. Each PC gains a share of 1,000 gp of the loot (a character that forgoes this award can increase Farshore's assets by this amount). Award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated a CR 11 creature.

1,000—1,399 Victory Points (Survival)

The Crimson Fleet pirates are defeated with severe damage and loss of life to Farshore and its allies. One unscuttled enemy ship is captured and taken as a prize, but the remainder escape. Several named NPC allies are slain (including some that may have become important to PCs—only Lavinia escapes this fate), and Farshore's population is reduced to 2d20+100. Increase Farshore's assets by 1,000 gp. Each PC gains a share of 500 gp of the loot (a character that forgoes this award can increase Farshore's assets by this amount). Award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated a CR 8 creature.

600—999 Victory Points (Defeat)

The Crimson Fleet pirates defeat Farshore, but take noticeable losses of their own. They sack the colony and burn many buildings, then retreat to Rat's End to regroup and recover. Lavinia survives, as do 1d3 Jade Ravens and 1d4 other named NPCs from the colony. Award no loot or experience points to the PCs. Ruined and at a loss, Lavinia and the surviving colonists limp onto the *Blue Nixie* and try to return to Sasserine, abandoning Farshore to the pirates, who return to Farshore in 2d6 days and claim the colony in the name of the Crimson Fleet.

Less than 600 Victory Points (Slaughter)

The Crimson Fleet pirates raze Farshore to the ground after looting anything remotely of value. Those not slaughtered in the streets are captured and become slaves; anyone who distinguishes themselves as "heroes" during the battle is executed. If Vanthus survives, he claims Lavinia as his personal slave; otherwise she is executed publicly at dawn along with any captured PCs or Jade Ravens.

Recovery

The Savage Tide Adventure Path assumes that the PCs and Farshore survive the Crimson Fleet attack (by having earned at least 1,000 Victory Points). If not, you can continue the campaign, but now the PCs must escape the burning colony. Eventually, they may learn that the Crimson Fleet has more interests in the region than Farshore, and can move on to the next adventure (although without the support of a nearby base of operations).

Assuming the PCs are victorious, though, the next few days in Farshore are filled with celebration marred only by funerals for those who fell to the assault. The colonists have grown stronger by surviving the ordeal, and the PCs are now held as local heroes.

Lavinia puts on a brave face during those days, but the revelation of her brother's fate has given her much to ponder. With the support of the PCs, she soon recovers and is stronger than before, bolstered by the knowledge that Vanthus can no longer cause pain to her or her friends and eager to get on with her life. Vanthus' body is buried in Farshore cemetery, in a lonely plot to the south marked only by a simple wooden stake carved with the Vanderboren family crest—Lavinia's sole concession to any remaining shred of humanity that might have lingered in her brother's corrupted soul.

After the battle, you are free to have as much downtime as you wish. Give the PCs time to recover, craft magic items, continue to improve Farshore, establish trade routes, and explore the Isle of Dread to their hearts' content. One matter should intrigue the PCs during this time, though. It takes several days to sort through the loot captured from the pirates, but papers recovered from the *Brine Harlot* indicate that the Crimson Fleet has been to the Isle of Dread before, to meet in a cove on the northern coast with a group referred to only as the "Lords of Dread." Further investigation reveals something chilling—it would seem that there are more *shadow pearls* out there, and that their source is somewhere in the lightless depths below the Isle of Dread.

Lemorians

The leaders of the Crimson Fleet are outsiders known as lemorians, humanoids transformed by a secret process in the city of Scuttlecove into half-demons. Lemorians have large patches of black scaly skin (in some cases covering their entire bodies), claws, pointed ears, horns, red eyes, batlike wings, small fangs, and long tails tipped with a poisonous stinger.

Lemorians use the rules for half-fiends as detailed in the *Monster Manual*, but with the following modifications:

- Instead of a bite attack, they gain a poison sting attack (damage remains unchanged from bite attack). The DC to resist the poison is equal to 10 + half the lemorian's Hit Dice + his Constitution modifier. Its initial and secondary damage are the same: 1d6 Wisdom damage. A lemorian often poisons his melee weapons with this venom.
- Ability score increases become Str +4, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Cha +4
- Spell-like abilities change as follows:

HD	Abilities
1–2	*command* 3/day
3–4	*suggestion*
5–6	*fear*
7–8	*charm monster* 3/day
9–10	*dominate person*
11–12	*mass suggestion*
13–14	*unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*
15–16	*mass charm monster*
17–18	*summon monster IX* (demons only)
19–20	*dominate monster*

APPENDIX 1: THE TOOTH OF AHAZU

The *tooth of Ahazu* is an ancient magic artifact that grants a physical link to a long dead demon lord. This single tooth is part of a larger collection known to scholars and sages as the *teeth of Dahlver-Nar*. Later in this campaign, the tooth could give the PCs an advantage in their quest, as long as they're willing to trust the heirs of the Abyss.

A DC 35 Knowledge (the planes) check is enough for a character to recall that the demon lord Ahazu the Seizer was known for his obsession with abducting powerful abyssal creatures (the more powerful the better) and imprisoning them in a place called the Wells of Darkness. Ironically, Ahazu himself is now imprisoned there.

To employ the *tooth of Ahazu*, you must remove one of your own teeth and fit the *tooth of Ahazu* in its place. This bloody process requires a full-round action and deals 1 point of damage. Replacing a tooth with the *tooth of Ahazu* does not affect bite damage or give you a bite attack if you normally lack one.

You must have the *tooth of Ahazu* in your mouth for one full day before you can use its ability. After this time, the tooth allows you to make grapple checks as if you were one size category larger than your actual size, effectively granting you a +4 size bonus on all grapple checks.

As long as his tooth is in your mouth, the fell influence of Ahazu seeps through your body. Your skin becomes cold to the touch, and the inside of your mouth turns black. Ahazu's avarice infects you, encouraging you to steal small, precious objects whenever the opportunity presents itself. You may choose to ignore Ahazu's influence, but if you do you take a –1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks as long as you continue to resist his influence and the tooth remains in your mouth.

The only way a foe can get your tooth is to render you helpless and physically remove it. Such a removal deals no damage. The tooth of Ahazu does not occupy a magic item body slot.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Price 6,000 gp.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTER

Aspect of Zotzilaha

This humanoid-shaped creature has the head of a monstrous bat, razor-sharp fangs, and orange glowing eyes. Membranous bat wings covered in thin black fur the color of coal jut out of its back. Its hands end in long, cruel claws, and its body radiates waves of intense heat.

ASPECT OF ZOTZILAHA **CR 12**

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, fire)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, speak with bat; Listen +23, Spot +23

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, Olman; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +14 natural)

hp 161 (14 HD); **DR** 5/epic

Immune fire, paralysis, poison, sonic

Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 22

Fort +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

Weakness vulnerable to cold

Spd 30 ft.; fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee* bite +19 (1d8+15 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d6 Strength drain) and
2 claws +17 (1d6+10 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d6 Strength drain)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with claws)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +24

Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack

Special Actions breath weapon, *summon bats*

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 30, Dex 18, Con 25, Int 7, Wis 22, Cha 25

Feats Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Hide +21, Intimidate +26, Listen +23, Move Silently +21, Search +23, Spot +23

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-foot cone of unholy fire, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 8d6 (half fire, half unholy), Reflex DC 24. A character that fails to save against this attack has his flesh scoured away by the ravenous unholy flames, and must make a DC 24 Fortitude save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Heat (Su) An aspect of Zotzilaha is infused with the fire of the volcano. It inflicts an additional 1d6 points of fire damage whenever it strikes a foe with its bite or claws. A foe that strikes the aspect with a natural weapon or an unarmed strike also takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

See In Darkness (Ex) An aspect of Zotzilaha can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by *deeper darkness*.

Speak With Bats (Ex) An aspect of Zotzilaha can *speak with animals* with all bats and batlike creatures.

Strength Drain (Su) Any creature damaged by an aspect of Zotzilaha's bite or claws takes 1d6 points of Strength drain as he is inflicted with feverish tremors.

***Summon Bats* (Sp)** An aspect of Zotzilaha may summon 2d6 fire bats or dire bats once per day. The bats appear immediately and serve the aspect for up to 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 6th-level spell.

Zotzilaha often dispatches aspects of his divine might to his shrines, as much to display his wrath and power as for any other cause. The manifestation of an aspect in his shrine on the Isle of Dread is relatively recent, spurred by the theft of an idol from the shrine several weeks ago (see DUNGEON #141).

In combat, the aspect uses his breath weapon at the start of any fight. He then summons fire bats (if in a cramped area such as the shrine in this adventure) or dire bats to aid him. His arms have a surprisingly long reach that his foes often underestimate since he usually keeps them folded in front of him like those of a mantis.

Stephen S. Greer is proud to have been able to contribute to the Savage Tide Adventure Path alongside so many talented writers. The thought of helping kill off countless characters on the Isle of Dread makes him feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

Gary Holian is delighted to see the Isle of Dread sprout again from the seeds he planted in DUNGEON #114. May it bury another million adventurers in shallow graves.

Aspect of Zotzilaha

Scaling the Adventure

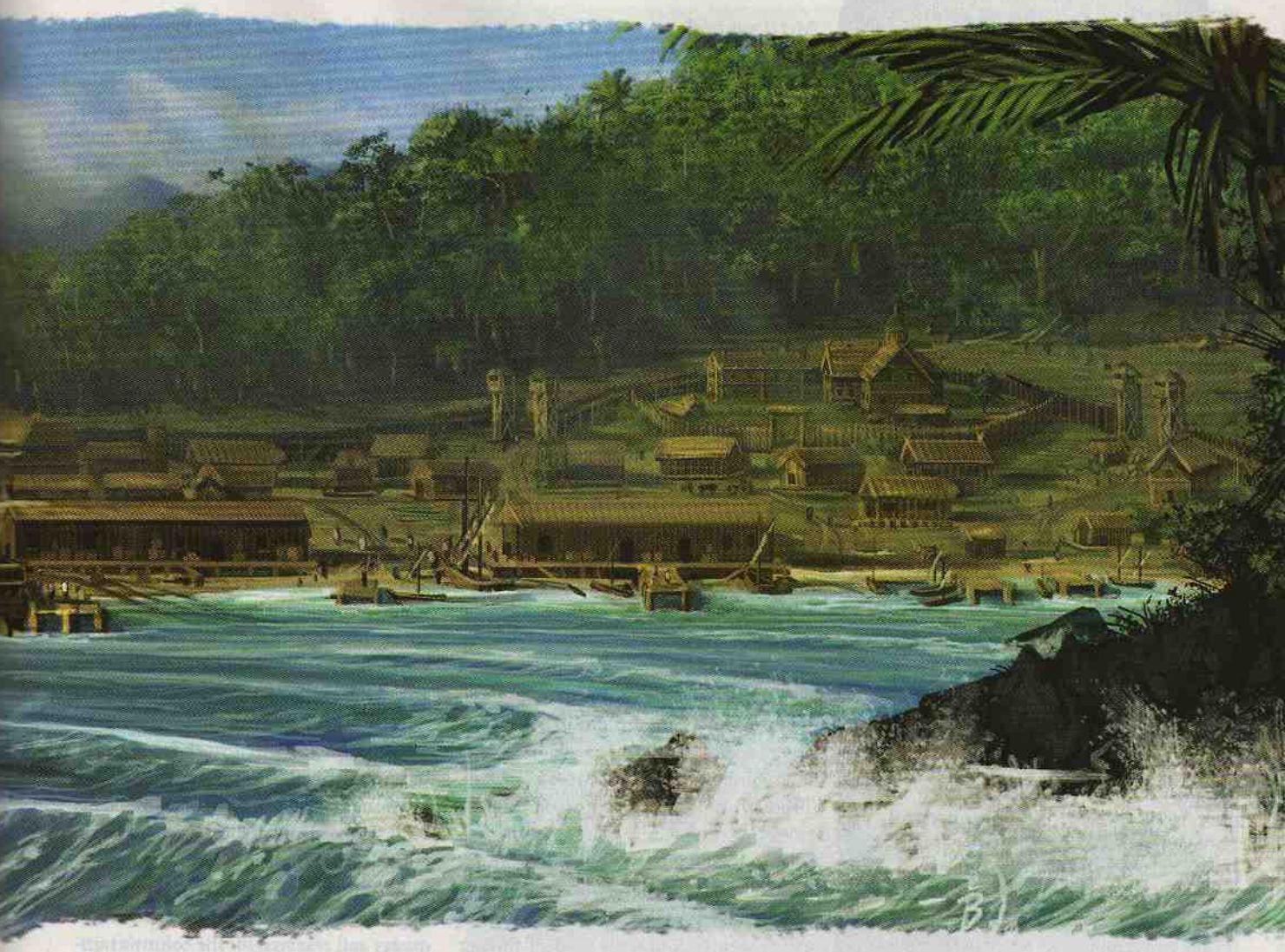
"Tides of Dread" is designed for a group of four 9th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 7th–8th-level or 10th–11th-level characters. Simply adjust all NPC character levels up or down as appropriate by a number equal to the increase or decrease in average party level from 9. Don't forget to adjust treasure accordingly. Specific changes to the adventure are as follows:

7th–8th-level characters: Give the PCs an additional few weeks or an extra month to prepare for the Crimson Fleet attack. Remove one of the fire bats from the "Wings of Fire" encounter, and reduce the aspect of Zotzilaha's HD by 2–4. Replace Temauhti-tecuani with an unadvanced but still elite tyrannosaurus. Reduce the emerald anaconda to 16 HD and Huge size. Remove one of the flesh golems from "Amphibious Assault," all of the yuan-ti halfbloods from "Take out the Snakes," and 1–2 of the vrocks from "Kill the Vrocks."

10th–11th-level characters: Reduce the amount of time the PCs have to prepare for the Crimson Fleet attack by two or three weeks. Add 2–4 fire bats to each encounter with these creatures, and increase the aspect of Zotzilaha's HD by 2–4. Increase Temauhti-tecuani's HD by 3–6. Increase the emerlad anaconda's HD by 3–6. Increase the HD of the golems in "Amphibious Assault" by 3–6, and add 1–2 more vrocks to "Kill the Vrocks."

Savage Tide
Farshore
City of Hope

BY STEPHEN S. GREER AND GARY HOLIAN
BY BEN WOOTEN
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI



The Isle of Dread has long been the stuff of legend. Tales of its existence, dating back to the Age of the Explorer Kings, were used to spook new deckhands and fascinate children in seaside ports. Yet the Isle was only a mystical mirage until recently, when the discovery of famed explorer Rory Barbarosa's journal brought it back to prominence and sparked a desire among the adventurous to locate its distant shores.

Hidden deep in the Vohoun Ocean, thousands of miles from the civilized lands to the north, those who attempted to use Barbarosa's journals to find the Isle of Dread found the undertaking exceedingly difficult, and many ships were lost in the attempt. Until, that is, Captain "Mad" Madsen Atirr, one of Barbarosa's original crewmen, braved the southern waters again in his infamous ship, the *Morningstar*. In the process, he created the first accurate seacharts to the Isle of Dread.

Accompanying Atirr was an adventurous young woman named Larissa Iomundi, who became one of only a few to own a copy of this highly prized map. After the successful journey to the Isle of Dread and her subsequent return to Sasserine, Larissa was unable to forget the wondrous sights and exotic locales she'd experienced. Several years later, after marrying into nobility, she told her husband Verik Vanderboren of her journey, and the two hatched an outrageous plan. They would not only return to the Isle, but would settle it, establishing a colony on the island.

Four years ago, after considerable preparation, the Vanderborens outfitted two ships for the journey. They assembled a crew of explorers, sailors, and colonists, and secured the aid of Lord Manthalay Meravanchi, a veteran explorer of the Amedio Jungle and one of the few Meravanchis to escape his family's reputation for debauchery. After an arduous passage, the colonists finally reached the Isle of Dread. Unlike others drawn in by lurid tales from Barbarosa's diary, the Vanderboren Expedition

Shopping in Farshore

It's likely that Farshore will be the only place the PCs have to sell treasure and purchase gear for some time. Although the colony's gp limit and assets are higher than most settlements its size, they're still quite a bit lower than what the players might expect. This should force PCs to adapt to the treasure they find during the course of the adventures. As a result, you should strongly consider customizing some of the treasure found in this adventure path to your particular campaign. If your party's fighter happens to have Weapon Focus (falchion) and Weapon Specialization (falchion), you should consider altering a magic weapon here or there so that he can take advantage of it. Likewise, if your party wizard is a necromancer who can't use conjuration magic, you might consider changing that *wand of stinking cloud* into a *wand of vampiric touch*.

As the PCs aid in the colony's development, upgrading its resources and helping to establish trade routes, Farshore's gp limit and assets increase. Once trade routes with Sasserine and other northern cities are established, it's possible to purchase goods worth up to 40,000 gp, with significant delays in delivery. Characters with access to *teleport* and other powerful travel spells can of course make their own journey back home to Sasserine to shop, but keep in mind that Farshore is about 1,800 miles from Sasserine, and the terrain between the two locations is far from hospitable...

didn't seek to pillage or exploit the Olman natives living there. Instead, they won their trust and grudging respect, returning at least as much value as they took in trade. After much bargaining, the Vanderborens forged a treaty with the people of the Seven Villages and won control of the 25-square-mile islet of Temute on which to build the colony.

Temute ("the abandoned place") became the site of the first true northern settlement in the archipelago. The initial effort was challenging. Temute had been uninhabited by the Olman for years, and coaxing them to its shores to assist in constructing the colony proved difficult. Metal was in short supply. Eventually, the Vanderborns decided to return to Sasserine to organize a re-provisioning, leaving Lord Manthalay in charge of the colony. One of the ships, *The Mercurial*, was lost at sea after an attack by a monstrous leviathan, but the *Blue Nixie* managed to return to Sasserine safely, if only just. It took several months to repair the badly damaged ship, and after that, other developments kept the Vanderborens from returning to Farshore with more supplies. They remained in periodic contact with Lord Manthalay via spells like *sending*, but every attempt to return met with failure for one reason or another. And just as they'd purchased a new ship to accompany the *Blue Nixie* on a return voyage, treachery laid the Vanderborens low. Their own son, Vanthus, burned them and their new ship to ashes on its maiden voyage.

Farshore has thus spent the last several years on its own. Local Olman villagers, attracted by the wonders the northerners produced, aided them in expanding and building, and taught them many secrets about their new home. Expeditions to the mainland of the isle were common, although most of those that attempted to explore the interior never returned. Within two years, the colony was nearly completed, and a hard-won community was established on Temute. Flushed with potential, but with need of further supplies, Farshore now waits patiently for more resources from Sasserine before it can finally become the self-sustaining trading post envisioned by the Vanderborens so many years ago.

"Tides of Dread" begins and ends in Farshore, and its citizens can become close allies of the PCs as they contribute crafts and supplies, provide information, and aid in its defense. This detailed description of the colony and its residents offers endless roleplaying opportunities and adventures for your players. Welcome to Farshore!

Farshore (hamlet): Conventional; AL NG; Population 240; 800 gp limit (Farshore's resources and lack of real competition grant the hamlet a higher gp limit than normal); Assets 9,600 gp; Isolated (220 humans, 7 half-elves, 6 halflings, 4 dwarves, 3 gnomes).

Authority Figures: **Lavinia Vanderboren**, nominee for Farshore lord mayor (NG female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 6), **Lord Manthalay Meravanchi**, nominee for Farshore lord mayor (LN male human aristocrat 3/fighter 5), **Professor Aldwattle**, Council Member (CG male human wizard 5/expert 2), **Vesserin Catherly**, Chaplain and Council Member (NG male half-elf cleric 6), **Telda Syren**, Council Member (CG female half-elf expert 4), **Militia Captain Ulvar Kabbanja**, Council Member (LG male human fighter 4).

FARSHORE

Farshore was established as a permanent base from which to explore the Isle of Dread and export its resources to Sasserine. The colonists chose a small harbor dubbed Verik's Cove on the western face of Temute as the colony site, since two natural seawalls would provide shelter from storms and attack from sea. A five-member Expedition Council meets weekly to direct colony affairs, but as Farshore has grown, the need for a leader has grown as well.

The colony is still a work in progress, but is built to last. Approximately sixty buildings nestle within the palisade, built primarily from local materials with considerable additional labor supplied in barter by the local natives. The structures are wooden, as stone is difficult to quarry and reserved for the colony's rainwater collection wells. The buildings are mostly single-story structures composed of tightly spaced horizontal logs cut from the surrounding jungle. The exteriors are covered in reddish-hued adobe consisting of clay, water, and dried vegetation to give the buildings a smooth surface that keeps them cool during the day and warm at night. The roofs are covered in a darker red tile that is fired within town.

Farshore was originally designed as a trading post. Several short wooden piers of various heights and lengths jut out into Verik's Cove from the Farshore waterfront, and long warehouses near the docks are used for storage. Stone jetties extending from the cliffs flanking the cove provide protection against storms and erosion.

Fifty-three families live in Farshore, the majority of which are former resi-

dents of Sasserine who have cast their lot with the colony. A handful of Olman natives have taken up semi-permanent residence in Farshore as well, but most of them are transient day laborers and traders who live in the seven surrounding villages. The colony economy is primarily sustained through trade with the Seven Villages, and food and clothing are provided for locally. Fishing is a daily activity, and hunting is plentiful on Temute and the surrounding islands. The natives trade pearls and precious coral with Farshore for manufactured goods. Rare woods, plants, and spices are collected from within the jungle and stored in the warehouses for eventual shipment back north. Overall, the settlement has very good prospects if it can establish a trade route with Sasserine.

With Lavinia Vanderboren's arrival in Farshore, the political scene in the colony becomes complex. A third of the colony's citizens are staunch supporters of the Vanderboren name, and are overjoyed to have a scion back in town. Another third have grown embittered at a perceived abandonment of the colony by the Vanderborens, and are strong supporters of Lord Manthalay Meravanchi and his plan to annex several of the Olman villages for Sasserine. The final third of Farshore's citizens remain undecided. By the time the PCs reach the colony, plans are already afoot by the Expedition Council to set up a vote to determine who should serve as Farshore's lord mayor: Lavinia Vanderboren or Manthalay Meravanchi.

Farshore Map Locations

Listed below are notes for several key locations in Farshore. Each location is also given an upgrade task; if the PCs accomplish the task listed to upgrade the building or area, the colony improves in the manner indicated. In some cases, these upgrades have little or no short-term impact on Farshore, but all of them can increase the morale and defense of the colony.

Many of the upgrades require time and labor in order to take effect. As a general rule, one group of laborers (a workforce) consists of a crew of 20 people. Not everyone in the colony is a skilled laborer, but there are enough to field up to 4 at a time. Additional workforces can be gathered from allied Olmans (this requires a visit to the Seven Villages and a DC 30 Diplomacy check—each check takes 1d4 days to attempt), or from any affiliations the PCs belong to. If a PC has an affiliation score of 15 or higher, he can organize a single workforce to toil on a project. A workforce assigned to an upgrade project cannot be used on a second project at the same time. You can assume that payment for the laborers comes from the Farshore or affiliation treasury—the PCs don't have to pay the workers from their own funds.

Each upgrade is assigned a number of Victory Points ("VP")—each time the PCs complete an upgrade, add the indicated number of points to their total when determining their level of success against the Crimson Fleet assault at the end of "Tides of Dread." Most upgrades also have a workforce requirement ("WF") and a time requirement listed, while others simply say "Adventure," indicating that the upgrade must be handled by

the PCs—the amount of time such an upgrade takes depends entirely upon their methods and solutions. If the PCs are on good terms with the Jade Ravens (see page 69), they can assign an adventure upgrade to them. You can assume that it takes the Jade Ravens 1d6 days to complete and recover from an adventure upgrade. An upgrade listed simply as "Check" or "Spell" indicates that a PC must spend the listed amount of time working on the upgrade, at which point he makes a specific skill check or casts a spell to achieve success. A skill check may be attempted numerous times, but once successful, additional checks cannot further enhance the location. If the PCs have a good relationship with an NPC, he can be convinced to spend this time and make the appropriate skill check instead with a DC 15 Diplomacy check.

1. The Docks

The Farshore waterfront bustles with activity most of the day, as over half the colonists have some interest in what goes on here. Fishing boats and launches depart daily, the latter destined for neighboring isles, including the Isle of Dread. At any time of day, two guards (human warrior 1) keep watch here, and signal fires atop the jetties are lit at night so that stragglers at sea can find their way home.

Upgrade (50 VP; 1 WF, Check; 1 week or more): The entrance into Farshore harbor is a natural bottleneck that serves well to protect the colony from attacks from the sea, yet there is certainly more that can be done to shore up these defenses. A character trained in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) can plan several changes and enhancements to the harbor entrance, such as installing siege engines or sniper posts along the cliffs, creating artificial sandbars or submerged traps to slow the advance of enemy ships, and establishing more efficient patrol routes. This character must spend at least two hours a day for a week supervising the work. At the end of the week, he must make a DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check; success indicates that the improvements are sound, while failure indicates that at least another week of work is required. Each week work continues, the PC gains a cumulative +2 bonus on his Knowledge check.

2. Warehouses

A few long warehouses line the shore, storing goods ready for trade with the Seven Villages or awaiting export to the city of Sasserine. The warehouses are nearly full after three years of storage, and the exotic lumber, preserved spices, and other bulky bounty harvested from the isle are ready to go as soon as trade routes are established.

Despite increased guards, someone continues to steal supplies and equipment from the warehouses. A relatively recent development, these thefts have confounded all security attempts to date. Stolen items come in all shapes and sizes, but the thief has yet to leave any trace of his passage. Several colonists have begun to suspect treachery within the Farshore council, and violence could break out soon.

Upgrade (0 VP; Adventure): The thief is not one of the colonists, but a greedy ethereal filcher that has been sneaking into the settlement, taking things, and stashing them in its cave on the northeast shore of Temute. The creature stages its attacks at different times in the night, never striking more than once a week. If the PCs don't set up a sting to catch the aberration, rumors of a four-armed hopping monster soon start to spread throughout Farshore.

Ethereal Filcher: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 104.

3. Palisade

A 15-foot-high wooden palisade surrounds the landward approach into Farshore. While functional, the fortification was built by colonists who didn't have an experienced engineer to lead them, and a DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the wall isn't nearly as strong as it could be.

Upgrade (50 VP; 1 WF, Check; 1 week or more): A character trained in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) can plan several changes and enhancements to the palisade, including adding sharpened poles atop it and jutting from the base, greased walls, a low moat, and other changes that can fortify the wall. This character must spend at least two hours a day for a week supervising the work. At the end of the week, he must make a DC 25 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check; success indicates that the palisade improvements are sound, while failure indicates that at least another week of work is required. Each week work continues, the PC gains a cumulative +2 bonus on his Knowledge check.

4. Watchtowers

In all, four watchtowers stand on the Farshore palisade, two each over the gates into town. Currently, each tower is manned by a single guard (human warrior 1). In cases of emergency, an iron bell hangs from the guardpost's ceiling.

Upgrade (50 VP per watchtower; 1 WF each; 3 weeks each): The watchtowers serve well for any dangers that approach Farshore from the east and south, but not so well for attacks from the north or the west. A new watchtower could be constructed in the northeastern corner of the palisade, and one could be built on the southwestern bluff that overlooks the harbor.

5. South Gate

The road leading south from Farshore is used most often by laborers who work in one of several gemstone mines further inland on the isle of Temute. The mines produce a steady outflow of gems, but they aren't particularly efficient.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Profession (miner) check, a character can increase the gemstone mines' efficiency. This increases Farshore's assets by 10,000 gp.

6. Farshore Cemetery

Farshore's cemetery is tended by chapel priests, and is surrounded by a partially completed low stone wall. The colony has held its own over the last three years, and as a result the cemetery only has two dozen graves so far, mostly fishermen and hunters slain by troglodytes or wild beasts.

Upgrade (25 VP; Spell): Although Farshore has not had many problems with

undead, there are no clerics in the colony capable of casting *hallow* on this site. A PC who casts *hallow* here increases the community's morale, resulting in a stronger drive to defend the colony from attack when the inevitable occurs. The additional protection afforded to the cemetery frees up the priests of Farshore Chapel to focus more time on providing services and crafting magic items rather than guarding the cemetery—as a result, Farshore's gp limit increases by 1,000 gp.

7. East Gate

The road leading east from Farshore is used most often by hunters and farmers of the outlying regions. Temute is far enough from the mainland that dangerous predators don't overrun its wilds, yet the island is far from safe.

Upgrade (25 VP; Adventure): A small but tenacious tribe of troglodytes that dwells near the center of Temute has long been problematic for the colonists. These troglodytes dwell in a sizable cave overlooking a forest of banana trees and other specimens that are ideal for lumber, especially shipbuilding and repairs, but the colonists cannot enter the area without being viciously attacked by the fiercely territorial monsters. Worse, in the last few months, attacks have crept increasingly closer to the colony's boundaries. If the PCs can defeat the warlike trogs and their giant lizard pets, the colony's increased safety and new access to lumber and exotic fruits increases Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp. Further, the access to shipbuilding materials makes establishing trade routes much simpler. Three months after the PCs defeat the troglodyte tribe, Farshore's gp limit increases by 1,000 gp as the colony begins making contact with seagoing merchants and other settlements to the north.

Troglodytes (20): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 246.

Monitor Lizards (6): hp 22 each; *Monster Manual* 275.

8. Militia Barracks

Farshore's militia consists of a mere 18 human guards (human warrior 1), of which six are on duty for 8-hour shifts during most hours of the day. Only half of these guards live here, although the barracks can house three dozen with ease. **Militia Captain Ulvar Kabbanja** (LG male human fighter 4), a member of Farshore's town council and the mercenary company known as Zelkarune's Horns, has done his best to recruit for the militia, but he's not a very charismatic man. With the arrival of the *Blue Nixie*, Jade Raven **Tolin Kientai** (see Appendix) joined the militia and has managed to attract the interest of several other Farshore citizens, but if the militia is to become an actual force, they'll need more help recruiting.

Upgrade (25 VP; Check; 1 week): A character who spends a week trying to recruit people to the militia can increase the militia by 5 with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. This upgrade can be repeated each week (for up to four additional VP awards), but each time the DC of the check increases by 5.

9. Vanderboren Manor

Not quite as big as Lord Manthalay Meravanchi's Estate, this structure is still larger than other homes in the settlement. A small dome set with stained-glass windows depicting fair seas and sailing ships gives the structure a memorable look. Built by Larissa and Verik Vanderboren several years ago and maintained in their absence by four loyal servants, this simple yet elegant manor has only recently come back into use with Lavinia Vanderboren's return to Farshore. This manor features six guest rooms, all of which Lavinia makes available to any PCs who don't want to stay elsewhere.

Members of the Dawn Council who don't wish to involve themselves with the Meravanchis can take care of affiliation business here as they wish.

Upgrade (Special): The PCs can campaign for Lavinia Vanderboren, encouraging Farshore's residents to vote for their patron in the coming election for lord mayor. Initially, 80 citizens are undecided on who to vote for. After a week of campaigning, a PC may make a DC 20 Diplomacy check. Success indicates that he's convinced 1d10 of these citizens to vote Vanderboren. For every 10 points by which he exceeds this check, 1d10 more join the Vanderboren camp. Failure indicates that 1d10 citizens decide to vote for Meravanchi instead.

Lavinia Vanderboren **CR 7**

Female human aristocrat 2/swashbuckler 6
NG Medium humanoid
Complete Warrior 11

Init +7; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Dodge +2
hp 53 (8 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *rapier* +11/+6 (1d6+3/18–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +11 (1d4+2/19–20)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +7
Atk Options acrobatic charge, improved flanking
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of haste*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +7, Balance +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +25, Gather Information +10, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +7, Perform (stringed instrument) +8, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +7, Tumble +16
Possessions combat gear, +1 *leather armor*, +1 *rapier*, masterwork dagger, *ring of protection +1*, *gloves of Dexterity +2*, *cloak of resistance +1*, gold earrings (100 gp each), jade signet ring (80 gp)

Acrobatic Charge (Ex) Lavinia may charge through difficult terrain that would normally slow movement. She may charge through squares occupied by allies.
Dodge Bonus (Ex) Lavinia may designate an opponent during her action and receive a +1 dodge bonus to AC against melee attacks from that opponent. This bonus stacks with that granted by the Dodge feat, but Lavinia loses this bonus when she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.
Improved Flanking (Ex) Lavinia gains a +4 bonus to attack a flanked opponent.
Insightful Strike (Ex) Lavinia applies her Intelligence bonus on damage rolls with weapons that can gain the benefit of Weapon Finesse. This additional damage does not apply to targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits. Lavinia loses this bonus when she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

10. Meravanchi Manor

The largest home in the colony, Meravanchi Manor is surrounded by an immaculate garden and boasts two stories and an attached tower used mainly as a museum for the eccentric trophies of Lord **Manthalay Meravanchi's** (LN Male human aristocrat 3/fighter 5). Manthalay chose to accompany Lavinia's parents on their expedition to the Isle of Dread partially because he was intrigued by the exotic new discoveries promised by such a locale, and partially because he had grown disgusted with the excessive debauches of his brother Zebulah, the family head of the Meravanchis in Sasserine. His not-so-secret goal is to build enough wealth, resources, and power in Farshore so that someday he can return to Sasserine and wrest control of the family from his brother.

Over the past several years, Manthalay has become the de facto leader of Farshore; Lavinia's arrival has disrupted his plans and left him in a particularly foul mood. If the PCs manage to deliver his nephew Avner (see "Here There Be Monsters") safe and sound, Manthalay quickly puts him in charge of gathering votes for the coming election.

Manthalay also represents Zelkarune's Horns in Farshore. Characters who belong to the Sasserine-based mercenary guild can use Manthalay as a point of contact.

Upgrade (Special): The PCs can campaign for Manthalay Meravanchi, encouraging Farshore's residents to vote for him in the coming election for lord mayor, as detailed in area 9 above. Avner Meravanchi spends his weeks campaigning for his uncle, making Diplomacy +9 checks to gather votes. If he ever fails two consecutive checks, he becomes frustrated with the process and gives up.

Lavinia

11. The Clayworks

Clay tiles, earthenware crockery, adobe bricks, and even glass are manufactured in this large building. The raw materials for these projects (most of which go toward the upkeep of old structures and the construction of new ones) are gathered locally. **Greffold "Redfoot" Fiddlebitter** (CN male halfling expert 3) manages the clayworks with his family.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Craft (pottery) check, a character can increase the Clayworks' efficiency, increasing Farshore's assets by 3,000 gp.

12. Sellis' Woodworks and Smithy

This large building is home to **Dranys Sellis** (N male dwarf expert 2) and his staff of carpenters and smiths. Dranys and his workers almost single-handedly provide the raw materials for building and arming Farshore, and are generally thought to be the hardest-working folk in the colony. A treasure seeker at heart, Dranys awaits that "one big strike" on the islands that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Craft (armorsmithing, carpentry, or weaponsmithing) check, a character can increase the efficiency of this opperation. Each one of the three checks made increases Farshore's assets by 2,000 gp, for a total of a 6,000 gp increase if all three are made.

13. Tehrik's Tannery

The colony's hunt master, **Tehrik Arrelion** (CG male human ranger 3), doubles as Farshore's chief leatherworker and furrier. His two sons, Gerriss and Dantrik, and wife Galliana help him run the business.

Upgrade (0 VP; Adventure): There are countless sources for exotic leather and fur on the Isle of Dread, but many of them are too dangerous to harvest. The megafauna of the isle can provide quality components if a PC can harvest their hides without too much damage. Harvesting a hide takes a Survival check (DC 10 + the creature's CR). Hides from creatures of CR 5 or less do not noticeably aid Tehrik. Each CR 6 to CR 10 hide delivered to the tannery increases Farshore's assets by 250 gp (to a maximum increase of 2,000 gp). Each hide from a creature of CR 11 or higher delivered increases Farshore's assets by 1,000 gp (to a maximum increase of 10,000 gp).

14. The Last Coconut

This cozy gathering place within earshot of the docks is the colony's only tavern and inn. A dozen round tables and a small bar fill the airy common room. It serves tasty fare and potent drinks in a warm and inviting atmosphere provided by its gregarious proprietor, **Malfus Fairwind** (N male human bard 3) who often takes up his lute to provide rousing music for his clientelle. The Coconut is a place for relaxation and recreation

for the hardworking colonists and is often the first destination of visitors. The second floor features a half-dozen double rooms and one four-guest suite (currently rented by the Jade Ravens). One of the guest rooms is also currently inhabited by **Amella Venkalie** (CN female human rogue 4), assuming she survived the previous two adventures.

Upgrade (0 VP; 1 WF; 24 weeks): Lavinia Vanderboren is eager to load up the *Blue Nixie* with trade goods for Sasserine to establish the trade route between the two locations. With the possible exception of one of the PCs, Amella Venkalie's the best candidate to captain the *Blue Nixie* on such a trip. By giving her a workforce of sailors and laborers, she can be off to Sasserine at any time. (She bids a stoic farewell to any PC she has become romantically involved with, and promises to return as soon as she can). The *Blue Nixie's* return in about six months (along with a half-dozen more trading ships filled with colonists and goods) is enough to bring Farshore's population up to 450 souls. More importantly, the PCs can purchase or sell goods at this point as if they were in Sasserine (40,000 gp limit, Assets 31,300,000 gp), albeit with a six-month delay.

15. Farshore Chapel

A smartly finished building of adobe stands near the center of the colony. This single-story chapel features a belltower that rises higher than any other building in Farshore, a bell that not only announces the start of services but also serves the colony as a warning bell. The large pew-lined common room doubles as a meeting place for meetings of the Expedition Council or other public gatherings.

The primary purpose of the building is as the religious center of the settlement. The colony's initial size precluded the construction of multiple temples, so the colonists agreed that the various faiths would share one roof. The main worship room is non-denominational, with numerous small shrines in alcoves along the walls that contain small statuettes of various deities. The most popular deities venerated here are Ehlonna (the patron of the chapel's current caretaker), Pelor, and Fharlanghn, although all of the non-evil deities listed in the *Player's Handbook* have shrines here.

The resident cleric and caretaker of the chapel is **Vesserin Catherly** (NG male half-elf cleric 6). He is a short, wiry, and eminently pleasant man who has managed to serve as Farshore's spiritual guide without ostracizing any one particular faith, a task he is rightfully proud of.

Vesserin is a member of the Church of the Whirling Fury, although this is not public knowledge. He chose to travel to the Isle of Dread after hearing rumors of demonic influences in the region, and hoped to be able to spend some time investigating (and possibly quashing) such influences. So far, he's not had a chance to do so, as tending to Farshore's needs have taken up most of his time. If any PCs are members of the Church, Vesserin contacts them soon after they arrive to recruit their aid.

Only four acolytes (human cleric 1) serve Vesserin, although with the arrival of the *Blue Nixie* he gained a more powerful follower as well. The last time the PCs spoke with Liamae Teslikaria of the Jade Ravens, the capricious human sorcerer may not have seemed overly religious, but a near-death experience during the storm that separated the *Blue Nixie* from the *Sea Wyvern* in "The Sea Wyvern's Wake" put her in a coma, from which she was lucky to emerge. Since regaining her senses in the chapel, Liamae found that she's developed an entirely new set of magical skills. Her lucky escape from death drew the attention of (or perhaps was due to the intervention of) Rudd, the goddess of luck. Now a favored soul of Rudd, she looks to Vesserin for advice—if any PCs are divine casters, she may look to them in a similar way.

One thing that's been gnawing at Vesserin's consience for nearly a year is the fate of a Pelorian missionary named Noltus Innersol, who came to Farshore over a year ago independent of the other colonists. Noltus sought to spread the teachings of his faith up and down the Olman peninsula, and spent several days preparing for his missionary work here in Farshore before setting off into the island's interior. He hasn't been seen since, and Vesserin hopes he still lives. He asks the PCs to keep an eye out for signs of the missing missionary when he learns they intend on exploring the Isle of Dread themselves. Noltus's fate is revealed in the upcoming Savage Tide adventure, "City of Broken Idols."

Upgrade (25 VP; Check; 1 week): Vesserin welcomes any clerical aid he can get in handling the day-to-day chores of running the chapel. Any PC that can cast healing spells can spend a week helping him in various tasks such as healing, maintenance, sermons, and other spiritual matters. At the end of the week, a DC

Casting Votes

At some point during "Tides of Dread," when the PCs are in town but at least a few weeks before the Crimson Fleet attack, the Farshore Expedition Council holds a public meeting during which all citizens of the colony are invited to cast votes on who should become lord mayor. When "Tides of Dread" begins, roughly 1/3 of Farshore is undecided, and the PCs can choose to influence the result if they wish, as detailed in the upgrades for areas **9** and **10**—the PCs need only convince 41 colonists to vote one way to determine the victor. If the PCs do not take part in either upgrade, this adventure assumes that Meravanchi wins the election.

If Manthaly Meravanchi wins, he reorganizes much of Farshore's efforts at becoming a well-defended trading post and focuses on annexing the Seven Villages. After 1d6 months, Farshore's gp limit increases by 5,000 gp, but the loss of focus on defense reduces the PCs' VP total by 250. The Olmans are unlikely to take these developments well, and such actions could incite some of them to violent rebellion against Farshore.

If Lavinia Vanderboren wins, the colony continues on its course of becoming a well-defended trading post that exists in peace with the Olmans. This grants the PCs 150 VP, but may make an enemy out of Manthaly Meravanchi, which could have repercussions later in the campaign.

20 Knowledge (religion) check indicates that the spiritual well-being of the colony increases morale, granting the listed VP award. This award can be earned up to eight times for a total award of 200 VP.

16. Farshore Hall of Records

This modest building serves Farshore as a library and a hall of records. All important documents are kept here, protected by two iron safes, while other books and idle works of art line shelves in the main room. The hall is under the watchful eye of **Jeran Emrikad** (LN human wizard 2/rogue 1), an energetic and bright-eyed man in his late forties who fancies himself an explorer.

Upgrade (0 VP; Adventure): Jeran recently learned a local legend of a mysterious eighth Olman village said to once have been located on Temute. As the legend goes, the Kawibusas had a marked taste for warfare. Their warriors and zombie-masters braved the jungles beyond the Great Wall often to explore the ruins of the island's old "gods." On one of their forays, they uncovered a sunken temple deep within the jungle that contained an idol of a great ape, carved from a thick piece of obsidian encrusted with gemstones. The Kawibusas proudly carried the stolen idol to their home and placed it at the center of their village. That very night, a great fog rose up and engulfed their settlement. By dawn the entire tribe had mysteriously vanished. Olman visitors who came to the site several days later found the Kawibusa village empty, save for the ominous ape idol. They buried the idol, hoping to end its curse, and never returned. Since then, the story of the eighth tribe has become a popular tale among the Olman.

Jeran very much wants to discover the site of this lost village and the strange ape idol, although the site has proven difficult to locate, as the jungle has reclaimed it in the decades since they vanished. The site itself is located a mile inland from the northeastern coast of Temute—discovering its location based on Jeran's notes takes a DC 30 Survival check (one check may be attempted every 1d6 days). The empty ruins are now haunted by six wights. Once the undead are dealt with, a careful search of the ruins reveals a treasure trove of ancient Olman cultural artifacts, including some very valuable carved stones, a favorite of the ancient "gods." No sign of the ape idol can be found, but a DC 25 Search of the ruins uncovers a gold and jade necklace (worth 400 gp) bearing a strange symbol of a circle surrounding two jagged lines. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals this to be the holy symbol of Zagyg, a demigod of eccentricity and mischief. How it came to be here is a mystery.

If the Olman artifacts are returned to Farshore, they can be sold to northern collectors. Once trade routes are established, this increases Farshore's gp limit by 1,500 gp.

Wights (6): hp 26 each; *Monster Manual* 255.

17. The Apothecary's Infirmary

This building serves Farshore as a sickhouse. The few clerics in Farshore can't be counted on to deal with every illness, and while they pay regular visits to the infirmary, day-to-day care of the sick and wounded generally falls to **Telda Syren** (CG female half-elf expert 4), a skilled herbalist who's also spent her time studying the island flora and fauna in hopes of discovering new medicines, foods, and herbs. She was a close friend of Larissa Vanderboren, and has taken news of her death hard.

Telda has been studying the Olman tribes since her arrival and has learned most of their language and pictograms. She is concerned for their plight, considering the inherent dangers of the isle and the cultural disruption that the presence of the colonists no doubt presents. Her arguments with Lord Manthalay and Professor Aldwattle on how best to interact with the Olmans are legendary in Farshore, as she advises caution and non-interference in native affairs.

Upgrade (50 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Heal check, a character can increase the infirmary's efficiency so that when the attack comes, more of Farshore's residents will be in better shape to help defend the colony.

18. The Greenhouse

This unique building is located behind the infirmary, and sports a peculiar roof composed of a wooden frame overlaid by crude glass that allows sunlight in and provides a decent shelter for the plants and herbs within. Until recently, Telda Syren maintained the greenhouse on her own, but with the *Blue Nixie's* arrival, Jade Raven **Kaskus Kiel** has taken it upon himself to help. If he survives the previous two adventures, **Urol Forol** also ends up spending much of his time here.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check, a character can increase the greenhouse's collection of exotic spices, herbs, and other plants. Once trade routes are established with Sasserine, this increases Farshore's gp limit by 1,000 gp.

19. Aldwattle's Laboratory

This building houses the laboratory of an eccentric alchemist and naturalist from the mainland named **Hevrik Aldwattle** (NG human wizard 5/expert 2). Thrilled at the opportunity to be the first to catalogue and research the minerals, substances, and emanations of the isles, Aldwattle was an eager member of the original Vanderboren Expedition. Hevrik is also a member in good standing with the Witchwardens, and PC members of this affiliation may use him as a point of contact.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): The lab is a treasure trove of compounds, herbs, and chemicals. Any PC that has at least one item creation feat who spends a week with Hevrik Aldwattle can attempt a DC 25 Spellcraft check—success indicates he's taught Aldwattle some time-saving techniques. This increases Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp.

20. Farms

Although several smaller farms support Farshore beyond its walls, these two farms are the closest and therefore most important to maintaining the colony's food supplies. If he survived the previous adventure, **Tavey Nesk** is taken under the wing of one of these farming families.

Upgrade (0 VP; Check; 1 week): With a DC 25 Profession (farmer) check, a character can increase the farms' efficiency. This increases Farshore's assets by 5,000 gp.

THE JADE RAVENS

The PCs aren't the only adventurers in Lavinia's employ. The Jade Ravens consist of a group of mercenaries and adventurers who have served the Vanderborens for many years. During "The Bullywug Gambit," the Jade Ravens were captured by the monstrous invaders of Vanderboren Manor—the PCs had a chance to rescue them during the course of that adventure. Since then, the Jade Ravens have had little contact with the PCs. How they react to the return of Lavinia's favored heroes depends in large part on how they were treated by the party during "The Bullywug Gambit."

The Jade Ravens are unlikely to accompany the PCs on adventures , although if a PC takes Leadership one could become a cohort. They can be used to handle minor tasks required by adventurous types on Temute, and during the Battle of Farshore, they play an important role in the colony's defense, protecting parts of the colony the PCs aren't. Each Jade Raven unable to take part in the defense of the colony during this battle (due to death or other reasons) causes a –100 VP penalty.

The stat blocks given below represent the most likely ways in which the Jade Ravens progressed to 7th level over the course of the last few adventures. If, in your campaign, they have made different choices, you should alter them to more closely adhere to your preferred versions.

Tolin Kientai

Tolin is as vain and brash as he is handsome, a rugged man whose rustic good looks have served him well over the years. He may take an interest in an attractive female PC, although his ego might make him difficult to get along with.

As Tolin adventured, he came to realize that what truely appealed to him about his lifestyle was looking good in a fight. Growing less and less enamoured with the natural world, in part due to Kaskus Kiel's somewhat zealous streak of crusading for the same, Tolin abandoned the ranger class and began to focus solely upon perfecting his twin short sword fighting style.

Tolin's obsession with Lavinia is not as secret as he suspects. Certainly, the rest of the Jade Ravens know that he's been pining for their beautiful patron for many months, if not years. Lavinia herself has already made it clear that the feelings aren't mutual, so Tolin's been forced to supress his feelings. If Lavinia is romantically involved with a

PC, Tolin's jealousy might force him to do something rash, like challenge that PC to a duel, attempt to frame him for some sort of minor crime, or even seek out Meravanchi aid in finding a way to one-up his rival.

Tolin Kientai **CR 7**
Male human ranger 3/fighter 4
LN Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility
hp 39 (7 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 short sword* +12/+7 (1d6+6/19–20) or *+1 short sword* +10/+5 (1d6+6/19–20) and *+1 short sword* +10 (1d6+4/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +6 (1d8+3/x3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +10
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of haste*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12
SQ wild empathy +6
Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword)
Skills Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Listen +7, Ride +8, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 nature or underground)
Possessions combat gear, *+1 chain shirt*, 2 *+1 shortswords*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 40 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, 56 gp

Zan Oldavin

A jaunty, flamboyant man who takes perhaps too keen an interest in his dagger collection, Zan's carefree and sometimes irresponsible attitude tends to get all four of the Jade Ravens into trouble with the authorities. Of course, Zan doesn't view his pranks and stunts as anything more than charming attempts to keep things lively and interesting.

Of the Jade Ravens, Zan is the least happy with Farshore. Although Liamae had a rougher time on the journey here, Zan hated every moment of it with a passion. He misses the press of the city crowd, the wide range of choices when it comes to entertainment and alcohol, and the raw sense of civilization that Sasserine offers. Only his eroding sense of loyalty to Lavinia and the Jade Ravens got him on the *Blue Nixie*, and now he regrets that choice bitterly. His situation is compounded by an irrational fear of the jungle. He's had several glimpses of what dwells in its depths, and wants nothing to do with the Isle of Dead. As a result, he increasingly spends his time at the Last Coconut, drinking away the weeks and growing angrier and angrier. It's quite likely he comes to see the PCs as symbols of his situation, and as the weeks go on, they become the primary target of his pranks and tricks.

Zan Oldavin **CR 7**
Male half-elf rogue 7
N Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Elven, Orc

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; uncanny dodge
hp 41 (7 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 rapier* +9 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +9 (1d4/19–20/x3) or shortbow +8 (1d6/x3)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Combat Expertise, sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ trap sense +2
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +12, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +3, Hide +10, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Search +14, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +8
Possessions combat gear, *+1 studded leather*, *+1 buckler*, *+1 rapier*, shortbow with 20 arrows, 8 masterwork daggers, *goggles of minute seeing*, 14 gp

Kaskus Kiel

Kaskus has a deep and noisy love of mountains and caverns, and longs to return there some day after he's repaid a debt of loyalty to Lavinia, whose father rescued Kaskus from slavery to the Scarlet Brotherhood nearly a year ago.

Kaskus Kiel's loyalty to the Jade Ravens is matched only by his loyalty to Lavinia and the natural world. Although he spent much of the voyage seasick, he's fallen in love with the Isle of Dread and its exotic environs. One of the first things he did upon arriving was to forge a bond with an animal companion from a nearby lagoon—a cantankerous giant crocodile Kaskus has named Kruthkur. After several unfortunate misunderstandings, Kaskus no longer allows Kruthkur inside of Farshore; the crocodile has instead taken to living in the river just west of the colony.

Kaskus has been trying to convince the Jade Ravens to make an expedition into the Isle of Dread's interior, but so far, he's only been able to convince Liamae to join him. His obsession with the natural world has all but blinded him to the fact that the Jade Ravens are close to disolving as a group. When he learns that the PCs are planning on an expedition into the mainiland, he may volunteer his aid (especially if you feel that the PCs could use some help with what awaits them in the depths of the isle).

Kaskus Kiel **CR 7**
Male dwarf druid 7
LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 56 (7 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7; resist nature's lure

Spd 20 ft.
Melee *+1 scimitar* +6 (1d6+1/18–20)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Special Actions wild shape 3/day

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (35 charges), *potion of expeditious retreat*

Spells Prepared (CL 7th, +2 melee touch, +3 ranged touch)

4th—*spike stones*

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 16), *meld into stone, stone shape*

2nd—*bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, hold animal* (DC 15), *lesser restoration*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *longstrider, produce flame, speak with animals*

0—*create water, cure minor wounds* (2), *guidance, light, purify food and drink*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 6

SQ animal companion (giant crocodile named Kruthkur), trackless step, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Feats Augment Summoning, Natural Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration)

Skills Concentration +10, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Survival +4 (+6 nature)

Possessions combat gear, *+1 hide armor, +1 heavy wooden shield, +1 scimitar, pearl of power* (2nd level), 35 gp

Liamae Teslikaria

Liamae is a rebel against her noble parents who ran away from home to the exotic south to experience what life has to offer. She may become romantically involved with a handsome PC, but her capricious and sometimes self-destructive lifestyle habits (ranging from a fondness for exploring dangerous regions on her own to an increasingly morbid fascination with how lucky she really is) might put long-term relationships under undue strain.

When the Blue Nixie was caught in a storm during "The Sea Wyvern's Wake," Liamae was struck by a bolt of lightning and nearly killed. She woke from her coma at Farshore, her only memory of the incident a vision of an athletic woman wearnig tight clothing and a flowing blue cloak. In the vision, the woman defied all manner of peril, relying on what seemed to Liamae to be a delightful combination of physcial prowess and pure dumb luck. She's since come to realize that this vision was of the goddess of luck and skill, Rudd. Her newfound faith has softened her cynical and bitter edges to a great extent, and if she treated any of the PCs poorly before, she takes pains to make amends. Of course, since she may invite her new friends on any number of dangerous and frivilous adventures just to "test their luck" agaisnt the isle, her attention may quickly grow old.

Liamae Teslikaria CR 7

Female human sorcerer 4/favored soul 3 (Rudd)

CG Medium humanoid

Complete Divine 7

Init +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Dwarven, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11

hp 32 (7 HD)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +8 (1d6/×3)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3

Combat Gear *wand of mage armor* (15 charges), *wand of spiritual weapon* (32 charges)

Favored Soul Spells Known (CL 3rd, +6 ranged touch)

1st (6/day)—*command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds, divine favor, shield of faith*

0 (6/day)—*cure minor wounds, guidance, mending, resistance, virtue*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th, +6 ranged touch)

2nd (4/day)—*Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 17)

1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *magic missile, shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, daze* (DC 15), *detect magic, light, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18

SQ summon familiar (snake named Irradar)

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (shortbow), Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (shortbow)

Skills Bluff +7, Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +7

Possessions combat gear, mwk dagger, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection +1, cloak of Charisma +2*, silver holy symbol worth 50 gp, 78 gp

Mt.Zogon

GOKK, I FELT BAD ABOUT KILLING YOUR PARENTS, SO I REINCARNATED THEM. ARE YOU HAPPY?
YES!
YOUR DAD CAME BACK AS A COBRA AND YOUR MOM CAME BACK AS A RABBIT!
COOL.
UNFORTUNATELY, WHILE MUSHROOM WAS TELLING ME A JOKE, YOUR DAD DEVOURED YOUR MOM.
WHERE'S MY DAD NOW?
WHILE I WAS WAS LAUGHING, AT THE JOKE, A GIANT SPIDER ATE HIM.
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BY TONY MOSELEY ZOGONIA.COM

Mask of Diamond Tears

BY NICOLAS LOGUE
BY EVA WIDERMANN
BY ROB LAZZARETTI
ANY SETTING, HIGH LEVEL (13–20), URBAN

Talantier is known for its thriving art community, but when a master illusionist pilfers a recently unearthed funeral mask, an unfathomable extraplanar race turns its alien eyes to the town with sinister intentions. Only a band of brave heroes can stop an invasion destined to deliver the entire Material Plane into the deadly grip of a race of ethereal conquerors.

"Mask of Diamond Tears" is an adventure of intrigue, investigation, and illusion for four 13th-level characters in any campaign setting. You should read the entire adventure carefully before you start playing, as special preparations are necessary to run it.

Adventure Background

Millennia ago, the Khen-Zai waged an interplanar war from their floating pyramids of power on the Ethereal Plane. The ethergaunts, as they were commonly called, allied with the strange nerra of the Plane of Mirrors and sought to expand their reach by creating new constellations of mirror pathways between the near infinite dimensions of the planescape. With the intelligence gathered by their nerra spies, the ethergaunts coordinated their invasions. Striking swiftly from the Ethereal, the Khen-Zai brought entire worlds to their knees in matters of moments.

The ethergaunts were not interested in empire. Like locusts they fed upon their conquests, devouring their resources and raw materials completely before moving on. The natives of these dead worlds did not fare well. Ever in need of fresh soldiers to wage their constant war, the ethergaunts, in collusion with their nerra allies, created artifacts of great power to harness the refugees of the dead worlds for their own ends. Traditionally worn only by black ethergaunt commanders, a *mask of diamond tears* allowed these warlords to summon alternate versions of their enemies from a prison on the Plane of Mirrors to battle in wars across the planescape.

The subsequent downfall of the ethergaunts remains a mystery. Whatever

Talantier

The city of Talantier owes its prosperity to a famed half-elf diplomat by the name of Randall Willowsbreath, who negotiated a peace agreement between human settlers and the conclave of elves who had long resided in Talantier's outlands. The grand city was built as a cooperative effort of the humans and their sylvan neighbors. Talantier is heralded today as a bastion of peace and racial understanding and is known for its thriving art and theater communities.

Talantier (large city): conventional (town council), nonstandard (art scholar society); AL N; 40,000 gp limit; assets 70,824,000 gp; Population 24,400; integrated (human 56%, elven 30%, half-elf 10%, halfling 2%, dwarven 1%, other races 2%).

Authority Figures: **Grand Auteur Jacylen Byron**, LN female elf aristocrat 10/bard 6 (Head of the Art Scholars), **High Speaker Taluran Sentecore**, N male human aristocrat 4/rogue 8 (Speaker of the Town Council), **Captain Varina Talos**, LN female human monk 15 (Captain of the Guard).

Notes: Being involved in the arts is considered to be the most important civic duty of most residents. Artists and bards wishing to prove themselves often come to Talantier to make their mark. All visitors are welcome to the city, but most locals look down on those who have no interest in artistic pursuits.

Although you don't need to know the city's layout to run this adventure, DUNGEON #141 has a map of the city of Talantier.

the cause, the result was catastrophic. Many of the ethergaunts' pyramids were destroyed when they crashed out of the Ethereal Plane onto other planes. One such pyramid careened into the Material Plane, crashing into the Felador mountain range. In the centuries since then, the pyramid has fallen to pieces and disappeared beneath the shifting earth.

A group of scholars in the employ of Talantier's Museum of History recently discovered the remains of the pyramid. For the most part, the relics they recovered were little more than broken shards of pottery and metal objects corroded beyond recognition, with one notable exception: a *mask of diamond tears*. The none-too-erudite scholars concluded the ancient inhabitants of the pyramid used the decorative mask in funeral ceremonies. The valuable find was sent to the museum in a caravan along with other donations bound for its galleries and exhibit halls. The mask never made it.

Thaddius Tannenbaum III, an illusionist, notable member of the Talantier Art Scholar Society, and sometime thief of the odd objet d'art is responsible for the disappearance. Thaddius' passions for women and art often land him in trouble, and unfortunately for him, he was not the only one to take note of the mask's discovery. A white ethergaunt named Ritharius, long ago assigned to observe the Material Plane, intends to retrieve the mask. Now, with the ethergaunt's minions prowling his chateau and and his playboyish liaisons with several important ladies of society coming to a head, the last thing Thaddius needs is a meddling group of adventurers prying into his affairs.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs investigate the theft of the *mask of diamond tears*, interrupting a romantic dinner between the Captain of Talantier's guard and one of Thaddius's many simulacra. Next, the party speeds to Thaddius's chateau, were a rather swank masked ball is in full swing. The guests are all illusions, except for Ritharius and his gang of xill enforcers. The PCs face numerous foes, real and illusionary, before they find Thaddius. Once they deal with him (or enlist his aid), they square off against Ritharius in the chateau's observatory. The ethergaunt uses the mask to conjure mirrored versions of the PCs to battle the party, forcing the PCs to defeat extraplanar versions of themselves in brutal combat.

Adventure Hooks

Here are a couple of ways to entice the PCs into the web of illusion, romance, and interplanar intrigue surrounding the *mask of diamond tears*.

The PCs plan to offload some trinkets from their last adventure at the Talantier Museum of History. Tulisa Gadfly is too distracted by the *mask of diamond tears*' disappearance to take the time to appraise the party's goods. If they help her find the mask she is amenable to paying top coin for their loot and the retrieval of the mask.

The PCs happen upon a mirrored version of an old friend, family member, or mentor. After dealing with the imposter they learn that their friend was involved in the scholarly mission into Felador before she mysteriously disappeared. They learn that the mission was sponsored by the Museum of History in Talantier, and must travel there to investigate.

Chapter One: The Missing Mask

The adventure begins with an interview with **Tulisa Gadfly** (NG female human wizard 8/expert 5, Knowledge [arcana] +16, Knowledge [history] +18, Sense Motive +12), curator of the Museum of History, as she relates the particulars of the disappearance of the *mask of diamond tears*.

Tulisa Gadfly is a bookish, dark-haired woman and one of the most intelligent members of Talantier's artistic elite (this is what initially attracted Thaddius). Tulisa is not a warm person, as she spends all of her time surrounded by relics and tomes rather than people, and her manners suffer as a result. The loss of "the potential find of the century" upsets her greatly, and she has become obsessed with recovering the mask.

Tulisa hasn't slept in several days, as the PCs can learn with a DC 20 Spot or Heal check. If the PCs express their concern, Tulisa informs them that she has not slept well because of a personal problem. If the PCs succeed on a DC 25 Diplomacy check, Tulisa simply shakes her head and mutters "man troubles," changing the subject by describing the mask and then offering the PCs information about the theft.

She tells the PCs that Captain Varina Talos of the town guard investigated the wagon transporting the mask, and that the covered wagon was not forcibly opened. In addition to the mask, a statue donated by a patron of the museum vanished as well. Tulisa describes the statue as a muscular woman clad in leather armor.

If asked about the statue's donor, Tulisa tenses noticeably. A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the missing

statue is directly related to her "man troubles." She will tell the PCs that the donor is a "reputable art aficionado by the name of Thaddius Tannenbaum III." A DC 20 Diplomacy check causes Tulisa to break down and reveal how Thaddius stole her heart and now wants nothing to do with her. Relationship angst aside, Tulisa is very much in love with the illusionist and refuses to believe he is behind the theft.

If the PCs ask where to find Thaddius, Tulisa says, "Thaddius dines at the same restaurant every evening at eight o'clock. It's the Sylvan Standard, a beautiful elven cuisine spot on the Southern outskirts of Talantier. We used to watch the sunsets there."

If the PCs do not learn of Thaddius's connection to the statue from Tulisa, she directs them to speak with the captain of the town guard. She impresses on them the importance of haste, as she knows that the longer the PCs wait, the more likely it is that the mask will disappear forever. If the PCs enquire, they learn that Captain Varina Talos is currently dining at the Sylvan Standard.

The Sylvan Standard (EL 15)

One of the oldest establishments in Talantier, the Standard is a highly exclusive restaurant. Only the elite of Talantier are welcome without making reservations weeks in advance. The restaurant's owner and master chef, Yuri Sagesprinkler, founded the restaurant 500 years ago, transforming an enormous weeping willow south of town into a treetop paradise where patrons can enjoy an exquisite meal along with an equally exquisite view of Talantier and the sprawling forests to the south of the city. On a clear moonlit night, even the snow-frosted peaks of the Felador range are visible.

Gaining entrance to the exclusive restaurant is difficult unless the PCs have reputations as famous adventurers. If not, it takes a DC 30 Diplomacy check to convince Drannos, the haughty maitre d', to seat them. Bribing him only insults him. Attempting to wait for either party outside the restaurant is doomed to failure, as Thaddius and Varina arrive together via a *dimension door* spell. If the PCs can't talk their way inside, they will have to find a way to sneak in.

Creatures: At eight o'clock, Thaddius Tannenbaum appears in a dazzling explosion of white light and a chorus of angelic voices. This is not the real Thaddius Tannenbaum, however, but rather one of his many simulacra. Thaddius falls in love fast and falls out of love faster—though he rarely has the heart to break it off. He created these simulacra to continue dating his many girlfriends, leaving him time to pursue other interests (and other women). The simulacrum and his guest are escorted to Thaddius's private table as soon as they appear.

Varina Talos is a raven-haired beauty in a long black silk gown slit to the thigh. While the captain appears to be a very brusque, stern woman when she is on duty, in her best evening gown she does not strike the casual observer as a warrior.

Varina was once a skilled disciple in a far off temple of monks, but she became fed up with the sexist attitude of her fellow students and departed. She wandered for years before ending up in Talantier where Grand Autor Jacylen Byron, who rose to great power in spite of constant attempts by men to hold her back, offered her the position of Captain of the Guard. Varina rarely allows her feelings to get in the way of duty, but this time they have. She has never dated before, and is under the impression that Thaddius is the one exception to her belief that all men are untrustworthy.

If the party interrupts the dinner, Varina demands to know why the PCs are harassing her date. She does not reveal her office, instead allowing the PCs to create enough rope to hang themselves. If treated dismissively, or insulted by the party, Varina pulls her seal of office from her silk purse.

If the PCs try to convince Varina of Thaddius's involvement in the theft, they need to make a DC 40 Diplomacy check. Bringing up Thaddius' past encounters with the law does not help the PCs. Varina is aware of all the charges brought against her boyfriend, and is equally aware that his name was cleared in each case. She views the PCs' use of past incriminations as low mud slinging (–5 on the Diplomacy check). If the PCs point out that Thaddius donated the statue that disappeared with the mask grant them a +5 bonus on the Diplomacy check. If they bring up Thaddius' reputation for two-timing women, give them an additional +5.

Asking Around

The PCs may wish to ask around town for more information on Thaddius. If they do so, allow them a Gather Information check as follows:

DC 15 Thaddius is a bachelor and quite the ladies' man. He pursues dalliances with several of Talantier's ladies.

DC 20 At first glance, Thaddius seems nothing more than a spoiled playboy, but he is also a talented illusionist. He is very fond of obscure objets d'art. He keeps a sizable collection at his chateau on the northeastern outskirts of town.

DC 25 Over the past decade, there have been accusations that Thaddius has been involved in several thefts of valuable and rare art pieces, but no proof has been found, and searches of his chateau turn up no stolen goods. His personal retainer is a tall, homely woman named Desdemona, whose description matches the missing statue.

DC 30 Thaddius dates numerous ladies around town at the same time, and on more than one occasion people claim to have seen him in two places simultaneously.

VARINA TALOS **CR 15**

Female human monk 15
LN Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +12, Spot +12
Language Common

AC 25, touch 21, flat-footed 23; Dodge, Mobility, Deflect Arrows
hp 71 (15 HD)
SR 25
Immune poison, non-supernatural disease
Fort +9 **Ref** +11 **Will** +15 (+17 vs. enchantment); improved evasion

Spd 80 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +15/+15/+15/+10/+5 (2d8+3)

Attack Options Improved Disarm, Stunning Fist 15/day (DC 21), ki strike (magic and lawful), quivering palm 1/day (DC 21)
Special Actions abundant step 1/day, wholeness of body (30 hp/day)
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +14

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 13
SQ slow fall 70 ft.
Feats Dodge, Deflect Arrows, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (unarmed strike), Mobility, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike),
Skills Balance +12, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +10, Jump +33, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +12, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12, Tumble +14
Possessions *bracers of armor +4, ring of protection +2, periapt of Wisdom +4,* black silk evening gown (worth 250 gp).

Thaddius Tannenbaum III

Thaddius Simulacrum **CR 7**
Male human wizard 7
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 24 (7 HD)
Fort +2 **Ref** +4 **Will** +8

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)
Attack Options Combat Expertise, Quick Draw
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 7th, +5 ranged touch)
4th—*dimension door, greater invisibility, phantasmal killer* (DC 18)
3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, fly, major image* (DC 17)
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *blur, invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image*
1st—*disguise self, grease* (DC 14), *mage armor, ray of enfeeblement* (2), *shield*
0—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, read magic*
Prohibited Schools enchantment and evocation

Abilities Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 15
Feats Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Quick Draw, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (illusion)
Skills Bluff +7, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +8, Disguise +7 (+9 acting), Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +13, Spellcraft +10
Possessions masterwork dagger, same glamered robes as Thaddius Tannenbaum (see page 79), high soft leather boots
Spellbook Thaddius's simulacra do not carry spellbooks, instead they use the communal spellbook in area **C7**

Tactics: If the PCs resort to violence at any time, Varina trounces them soundly for their insolence. The captain only inflicts non-lethal damage unless the PCs draw weapons or sling spells.

If the PCs are able to convince Varina that Thaddius may be involved, the simulacrum immediately tries to flee by casting *greater invisibility* and *fly*. If Varina battles the PCs, the simulacrum casts *blur* on her before punishing the PCs with spells from the air. If the PCs overwhelm Varina, the simulacrum flees.

Development: If the PCs convince Varina and then capture "Thaddius" they may think their mission is accomplished unless they discover the true nature of the simulacrum. If the PCs do not discover this, Varina, her suspicions aroused, may see through the simulacrum. Even if the PCs manage to convince Varina of Thaddius's guilt, his chateau is outside of her jurisdiction and she cannot accompany the party there.

If the PCs destroy the simulacrum it turns to slush and snow. If the PCs defeat Varina Talos in combat but don't catch the simulacrum, then they are in some very hot water. They have assaulted the captain of the guard (while she was off-duty on a date, no less) and become fugitives. If they tousled with Varina but also showed her the true nature of the simulacrum, she lets bygones be bygones in light of Thaddius's much more painful betrayal.

In either case, the PCs' next step is a visit to the infamous Chateau Tannenbaum and an interview with the real Thaddius. Whether the PCs are acting in cooperation with the town guard to recover stolen property, or are fugitives from the law, there is no response to any indirect inquires. Eventually, the PCs will be forced to enter the chateau themselves.

Chapter Two: Chateau Tannenbaum

Since the theft of the mask, Thaddius has been scrying on Tulisa Gadfly with his *crystal ball*. Unless the PCs take magical precautions, he is well aware of their approach to his chateau and their interference with his simulacrum's date. The encounters below assume that Thaddius knows the PCs are coming and takes suitable precautions.

Spying on Thaddius, on the other hand, is difficult. He casts *false vision*

so that anyone attempting to scry on him sees him simply sitting in his personal chambers (area C11) enjoying his favorite pipe. He also casts *obscure object* on the *mask of diamond tears*. When the PCs arrive at Thaddius's chateau on the northeastern outskirts of the city, read them the following.

The stately chateau is carved with stunning reliefs of breathtaking landscapes. Statues of willowy elven maidens frame the front stairs. The roof of the chateau is shaped like a billowing bank of clouds, and is home to myriad magical creatures. Griffons prance, manticores menace, and rocs soar through the clouds. Each is carved in exquisite detail.

From outside, the chateau is well lit, and music and laughter echo from within. The large arched windows on the east wing glow with light and the prancing silhouettes of carousers flit back and forth inside. The glazed windows obscure vision, but it is obvious that some grand celebration is in full swing.

C1. The Entrance Hall

This large marble-tiled room is decorated with beautiful tapestries. A spiraling staircase twists up toward a balcony at the northern end of the hall.

A red tapestry depicting an enormous wounded lion surrounded by mounted hunters hangs on the east wall above large oaken double doors. One of the hunters is driving a spear into the lion's flank as it snarls back at him. The hunter's face, visible inside his helm, bears a strong resemblance to Thaddius.

On the west wall above a curtained entryway is another tapestry that shows a man in rugged leather and furs scaling an icy mountain. He winces as the wind tears his wolfskin cloak from his shoulders and threatens to buffet him from the cliff. The climber also looks remarkably like Thaddius.

Finally, an immense tapestry that dwarfs the other two hangs from the balcony. A peaceful scene of clouds and blue sky are the backdrop for a lone white-robed Thaddius surrounded by angels and archons.

When the PCs enter the hall, a portly, well-dressed chamberlain named Mathias welcomes them and directs them into the ballroom (area C2). He asks for their names, heraldry, homelands, notable deeds, and heroic accomplishments so that he may properly announce them to the other guests. Mathias is a *programmed image* (CL 15th, Save DC 23 if interacted with). If the PCs refuse to follow he simply smiles vapidly. If they enter the ballroom, Mathias announces them in a grand booming voice and the guests within applaud politely before resuming their carousing.

If the PCs reenter the entrance hall they catch a glimpse of Thaddius darting through the curtained entryway to area C3. This is also a *programmed image* intended to lure the PCs into the exhibit hall.

C2. Ballroom (EL 14)

Many guests crowd the dance floor at the center of this spacious chamber. Torchlight mingles with the warm glow provided by several ornate crystal chandeliers above. On the north side of the chamber, several long tables are filled with a grand repast of cooked meats, quail, vegetables, rare exotic fruits, and pastries.

Besides dancing couples, a number of trained elven dancing girls wearing flowing silk gowns with long sleeves and sashes undulate and twirl their way through the throng. At the east end a raised stage is home to a large band of strings and wind instruments that fill the hall with elegant music. Mirrors line the walls, making the room appear larger than it is.

Creatures: The ballroom is under a *screen* effect (CL 15th, Save DC 27). The guests are illusionary, as is the food, although it tastes delicious. The torches and chandeliers are real, and so are the dancing girls, although they are not actually elves. In truth, they are xill cronies of Ritharius concealed in their maidenly forms by the ethergaunt's *seeming* spell (CL 15, Save DC 30). Six xills are disguised as elven dancers and four more wait in the Ethereal Plane to ambush the PCs. The members of the band are all part of the *screen* effect save one: the lute player on the end is actually Skreetvreet, a nerra ally of Ritharius. Nerra are humanoids native to the Plane of Mirrors whose entire bodies are highly reflective.

SKREETVREET **CR 10**

Male nerra (sillit) rogue 8
Fiend Folio 129
CN Medium outsider (extraplanar)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +19
Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Khen-zai, Nerra

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19; improved uncanny dodge
hp 101 (15 HD)
Resist cold 15, fire 15, electricity 15; **SR** 27 (reflective)
Weakness vulnerable to sonic
Fort +9, **Ref** +16, **Will** +10; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *shard rapier* +21/+16 (1d8+3/18–20 plus wounding)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +14
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +4d6
Special Actions shard spray
Spell-like abilities (CL 16th)
At will—*disguise self, false vision, mirror image*
3/day—*mislead* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 13, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 21, Wis 12, Cha 18
SQ mirror jump, trapfinding, trap sense +2
Feats Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shard rapier), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shard rapier)
Skills Bluff +22, Diplomacy +26, Disguise +22 (+24 acting), Gather Information +14, Hide +23, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +23, Listen +19, Move Silently +23, Search +23, Sense Motive +13, Spot +19, Survival +11, Use Magic Device +22
Possessions long black velvet robes, *shard rapier* (*+2 wounding rapier*, counts as an exotic weapon), *bracers of armor +4*, *ring of counterspells* (*dimensional anchor*)

Mirror Jump (Su) Nerras can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces at will in a manner similar to *shadow walk*, but using the Plane of Mirrors. As a standard action, Skreetvreet may touch a mirror and then exit from a mirror that is no farther than 1 mile away. Normally

automatically successful, Skreetvreet can attempt to jump through a surface that is only partially reflective (like a still pool of water or shiny metal object) with a 30% chance of success, although he must always exit through a mirror.

Reflective Spell Resistance (Su) The original caster becomes either the target or the point of origin of any spell that fails to overcome this SR. Skreetvreet is immune to gaze attacks, and such attacks are reflected as well.

Shard Spray (Su) Three times a day, Skreetvreet can shoot a 30-foot cone of mirror shards that deals 5d6 damage, no save. Any living creature that takes damage from the spray bleeds for an additional 2 points of damage per round. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or healing magic.

Xills (10): hp 32 each; *Monster Manual* 259

Tactics: The "elven maids" begin dancing with the party. The xills flank the PCs before viciously attacking. Once battle is joined, the four xills in the Ethereal Plane materialize. Skreetvreet uses the cover of the many illusionary guests to move in and sneak attack. If the PCs are bunched together, Skreetvreet strikes with his shard spray. If eight of the xills are downed or he is reduced to less than 20 hp, Skreetvreet flees through the closest mirror, joining Ritharius in the observatory (area **C13**).

C3. Exhibit Hall (EL 15)

This sprawling chamber is filled with glass cases, numerous statues, tapestries, and skeletons of all sorts of odd creatures. Chandeliers light the room and magical lights illuminate each glass case from within. Four impressive stone renderings of hound archons seem to watch over the exhibits from the north and south walls. Several large carved stone serpents sprout from the north wall of the room overlooking the exhibit hall.

The glass case contains several masks from ancient cultures. The one in the center of the case is a replica of the *mask of diamond tears* created by a *fabricate* spell.

Creatures: Indicated on the map are six megaraptor skeletons. The two closest to the east entrance are mundane. The other four are animated and under instructions to attack anyone who touches or interacts with any of the displays in the room. In addition, Thaddius has a special surprise for any particularly dangerous intruders: A petrified cryohydra is built into the north wall of the exhibit hall and the twelve "large carved serpents" extending from that wall are actually its heads.

Unless the PCs have somehow avoided Thaddius's detection thus far, the illusionist himself is present and observes the action while levitating behind a concealed peephole above the hydra behind the north wall.

Thaddius Tannenbaum III is a dilettante of large appetites. He is an upstanding citizen of Talantier, the most eligible bachelor in the city, a shameless rake, and a thief. The son of an aristocrat, he was left a large fortune by his father. Thaddius pursued arcane studies, becoming an esteemed student at a magical academy, though with a reputa-

tion as a troublemaker. After graduating he adventured, but found the risks too extreme for his taste and quietly turned to crime. Pilfering relics after they had been extracted from trapped tombs proved easier than going in to get them. So began Thaddius's glorious career as a "collector" of rare historical art.

Though an utterly selfish individual and egomanic, Thaddius is not evil and cannot bring himself to resort to violence, even emotional violence. He loves romance and the wooing of young women, but is never able to break their hearts after his interest dies. Hence his simulacra, a collection of "hims" to keep his many sweethearts happy.

Thaddius is an attractive man in his early forties, his black hair touched with distinguished silver at the temples. His chiseled features frame his piercing blue eyes.

THADDIUS TANNENBAUM III **CR 15**
Male human illusionist 15
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Ignan

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 48 (15 HD)
Fort +5 **Ref** +7 **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft.; freedom of movement
Melee +2 dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/19–20)
Attack Options Combat Expertise, Quick Draw
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +6
Combat Gear *wand of ray of exhaustion* (26 charges), *wand of stoneskin* (19 charges)
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 15th, +9 ranged touch)
8th—*maze, screen* (DC 25)
7th—quickened *displacement, project image* (DC 24), *waves of exhaustion*
6th—*greater dispel magic*, quickened *mirror image, stone to flesh* (DC 22), *true seeing*
5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), *false vision, nightmare* (DC 22), *persistent image* (DC 22), silent *phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *shadow evocation* (DC 22)
4th—*enervation, Evard's black tentacles, greater invisibility* (2), *phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *scrying* (DC 19)
3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, haste, major image* (DC 20), *protection from energy, slow* (DC 18)
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *fox's cunning, invisibility, mirror image, misdirection* (DC 19), silent *ventriloquism*
1st—*disguise self, mage armor, feather fall, Nystul's magic aura* (DC 19), *ray of enfeeblement, shield, true strike*
0—*detect poison, mage hand, message, read magic*
Prohibited Schools enchantment and evocation

Abilities Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 16
SQ summon familiar (cat named Darkmantle)
Feats Alertness (whenever Darkmantle is within arm's reach), Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Craft Wand, Forge Ring, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Quick Draw, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Disguise), Silent Spell, Spell Focus (illusion)
Skills Bluff +12, Concentration +18, Decipher Script +14, Disguise +15 (+17 acting), Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +23, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +20
Possessions combat gear, *+2 dagger, headband of intellect +2, ring of freedom of movement, cape of the mountebank, glamered crimson robes* that constantly change appearance, high soft leather boots
Spellbook as above plus 0—all except enchantment and evocation, 1st—*color spray, comprehend languages, grease, reduce person*, 2nd—*arcane lock, blur, detect thoughts, Melf's acid arrow, resist energy*, 3rd—*fly, illusory script, invisibility sphere*, 4th—*dimension door, hallucinatory terrain, rainbow pattern, shadow conjuration, stoneskin*, 5th—*cloudkill, dream, fabricate*, 6th—*permanency, programmed image, Rary's telepathic bond, repulsion, shadow walk, veil, flesh to stone*, 7th—*spell turning, mass invisibility, simulacrum, control weather*, 8th—*clone, greater shadow evocation, polymorph any object*

Advanced Megaraptor Skeletons (4): hp 78 each; *Monster Manual* 227.

Twelve-Headed Cryohydra: hp 129; *Monster Manual* 157.

Tactics: Thaddius watches the PCs battle the megaraptors, taking stock of their abilities. After the battle he casts silenced *ventriloquism*, throwing his voice to the spot in front of the glass mask case before casting *project image*. He speaks through the image, telling the PCs to leave his chateau immediately. If the PCs attack his image, he says, "It truly makes me sorry to do this" before casting *stone to flesh* on the petrified cyrohydra. The hydra is ornery, confused, and angry as the Nine Hells. It immediately attacks the PCs and lays waste to the room, fighting until slain. If the PCs slay the hydra, Thaddius shakes his head sadly and lets his image wink out before fleeing to area **C11** through a concealed trap door (Search DC 30) above the hydra.

Treasure: Most of the relics in this room are relatively worthless, but a DC 20 Search uncovers an ornate turtle shell oracle bowl studded with emeralds worth 2,000 gp, a 2,000-year-old glazed vase worth 4,000 gp, and the ornamental war shield of a primitive tribe's chieftain, magically cut from a single massive crystal worth 7,500 gp.

C4. Gallery

This large room contains several square stone pillars supporting the rafters above. Along the walls and mounted on the pillars are dozens of large paintings depicting landscapes, portraits, and still-lifes framed in gilded wood. The largest painting, taking up most of the west wall, is an immense portrait of Thaddius sitting in a chair with a well-muscled woman in leather armor standing behind him.

Treasure: The 30 paintings in this chamber are good quality and, with frames, are worth about 200 gp each to an interested buyer.

C5. The Kitchens (EL varies)

This large room contains several stoves and tables. Aprons hang on a rack by the door. Cutlery, fine crockery, pitchers, platters, and trenchers are stacked neatly on the table against the west wall. Metal pots hang from hooks above. A wooden door is located on the north wall as well as a small stairwell leading down.

Creatures: The kitchens are empty unless the PCs are chasing the sounds of pursuit from the secret door in area **C10**. In this case, they arrive at a trap door that opens onto a beam 60 feet above the

floor. There they find Desdemona and Ravenclaw fighting furiously as they race effortlessly along the rafters. If the PCs join the fray they must make a Balance check every round to avoid falling (as do Desdemona and Ravenclaw). The DC is 15 to move half speed and 20 to move full speed or engage in combat.

An orphan, Desdemona was raised by the streets, where she learned to fight, steal, and survive. Already an accomplished burglar by the tender age of sixteen, she was offered the job that changed her life. A rival of Thaddius sent Desdemona to steal a rare elven woodprint from the illusionist's chateau. Thaddius caught her red-handed, but was very impressed by her abilities. He took Desdemona under his wing as the daughter he never had. Desdemona has been secretly in love with Thaddius ever since he caught her picking through his collection. She is too plain-faced and uncreative to draw his romantic interests, and it wounds her to the soul. She is tortured by her unrequited love, but is happy at least to be close to Thaddius as his personal cat burglar and companion.

Desdemona is an accomplished thief and skilled combatant, but has no taste for blood. She prefers to incapacitate her foes, and makes excellent use of her quarterstaff in a fray, using her throwing knives only to deter pursuit.

DESDEMONA **CR 14**

Female human rogue 14
CN Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +10, Spot +6
Language Common

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 16; improved uncanny dodge
hp 79 (14 HD)
Resist improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +4
Fort +5, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6; evasion, slippery mind

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 merciful quarterstaff* +12/+8 (1d6+3 plus 1d6, nonlethal) and *+1 merciful quarterstaff* +12/+8 (1d6+1 plus 1d6, nonlethal)
Ranged mwk throwing knives +17/+12 (1d4+2/19–20)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +7d6
Combat Gear *potion of haste*, *wand of mirror image* (42 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (37 charges)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 22, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ skill mastery (Balance, Disable Device, Hide, Open Lock, Use Magic Device), trapfinding
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)
Skills Balance +20, Climb +16, Disable Device +15, Hide +26, Jump +14, Listen +10, Move Silently +26, Open Lock +13, Search +14, Spot +6, Use Magic Device +14, Use Rope +14
Possessions combat gear, *+3 studded leather armor*, *+1 merciful quarterstaff* (both ends), 6 masterwork throwing knives, *gloves of Dexterity +2*

Ravenclaw: hp 80; see Appendix 2.

Development: If the PCs help Desdemona defeat Ravenclaw she is deeply grateful. If the PCs have not encountered Thaddius in his chambers yet, she desperately rushes there in order to save him from his mirrored self. If the PCs allowed Thaddius to be killed by his mirrored self, Desdemona wails in agony before sinking to her knees in despair. She then pledges to avenge her love by slaying the mirrored Thaddius. If the PCs killed Thaddius, she battles them viciously until slain.

If Desdemona is slain, her clone awakens in area C7 and may reappear later in the adventure, either to aid or hinder the PCs.

C6. Wine Cellar

Dank and cool with earthen walls, this cellar houses two rows of wine racks. Several casks of ale and mead stand in a line against the south wall.

Located along the south wall is a secret door (Search DC 25) leading to area C7 concealed by stacked ale casks.

Treasure: The wines in the cellar are extremely good, and each of the 130 bottles fetches 20 gp. A separate locked (Open Lock DC 40) display case contains the showpiece wines that Thaddius never intends to open. Each of these 20 bottles is worth 500 gp. In addition to these, the showcase contains a 1,500-year-old sylvan red worth 6,000 gp and a bottle of the finest ambrosia brewed in the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia worth 10,000 gp. Hidden among wine bottles (Search DC 30) are a *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of mirror image*, and a *potion of invisibility*.

C7. Laboratory

This is where Thaddius conducts his magical research. It is also where his simulacra spend their time when they are not busy entertaining Thaddius's old flames. The simulacra are all under the effect of a permanent *Rary's telepathic bond* with their master. If the simulacra are unaware of the PCs encroachment on the chateau, read the following description when the PCs open the secret door. If the simulacra are aware of the PCs intrusions, you can still use the following description, but it is a *major image* created by the simulacra.

This stone-floored chamber is filled with several tables strewn with hammers, chisels, and other sculpting tools. On the south wall, three strange humanoid-shaped molds are carved into the stone. Two are currently covered in blue-tinted glass and filled with liquid. Two figures float inside motionless. One has long black hair and a feminine form, while the other is male. Sitting at one of the tables are two men who are identical in appearance and look exactly like Thaddius. They are seated across from each other playing a game of chess. Another Thaddius wearing a red smoking jacket is seated at a chair by the east wall, engrossed in a book and quietly puffing on a pipe.

Creatures: If the simulacra in this chamber are unaware of the PCs' approach, they are engaged in the activities mentioned above. Once they see the party they panic and leap up to defend themselves. If they were aware of the PCs they all cast *greater invisibility* right before the party enters, and two of them wait along the north wall to strike while the third hides in the empty mold on the south wall.

The simulacra are identical to the one detailed in Chapter One except that they have memorized two different spells. Replace *dimension door* with *enervation* and *fly* with *vampiric touch*.

Thaddius Simulacra (3): hp 24; see page 79.

Tactics: If the PCs surprise the simulacra, they react as follows. On the first round the two playing chess cast *mirror image* on themselves while the third casts *greater invisibility*. Next round the chess players attack with *enervation* while the third casts *blur*. On the third round the chess players cast *vampiric touch* while the other casts *displacement*. On the following round the third simulacra joins the battle, casting its offensive spells.

If the simulacra were ready for the party, they have already cast *greater invisibility, blur, mirror image* and *displacement* on themselves in that order before the PCs come in, and attack with offensive spells. The simulacra fight until destroyed. They are under orders to protect the laboratory and clones.

Development: Also located in this chamber are two clones created by Thaddius. One is of himself and the other is of Desdemona. If at any time in the adventure either is slain, their souls inhabit the clones immediately (if the souls are free to do so and the clones have not been destroyed). The clones come to life remembering everything that happened until their death. They lose one level, however, and their abilities must be altered accordingly.

Treasure: Located in a secret compartment underneath a box of sculpting tools (indicated on the map) is Thaddius's emergency kit. A DC 30 Search check is needed to locate the compartment. Inside is one of Thaddius's spell books for the simulacra as well as a *wand of ray of exhaustion* (50 charges), a *wand of dispel magic* (50 charges) and three *potions of cure moderate wounds*. The spell book is a duplicate of Thaddius's (see his stat block on page 79).

C8. The Pool (EL 11)

Stone gargoyles posed in various positions surround this beautiful black marble pool. Some snarl, while others simply recline as if resting by the water's edge.

If the PCs approach within 5 feet of the pool, the gargoyles appear to spring to life and attack. This is actually another *programmed image* placed by Thaddius (CL 15th, Save DC 23), and the gargoyles are not really moving. The true danger comes from the creature in the pool.

Creature: The water sitting in the pool is actually an elder water elemental that serves Thaddius. The elemental attacks any uninvited visitors who approach the pool close enough to set off the *programmed image*. The elemental fights until slain but won't chase PCs into the chateau for fear of damaging its master's home or prized belongings.

Elder Water Elemental: CR 11; hp 228; *Monster Manual* 100.

C9. Guest Quarters

These unremarkable chambers contain a fine featherbed, a dressing table, a mirror, and a large closet.

C10. Desdemona's Chambers

This spartan room contains a rack of steel bars at various heights and a simple bed. A large trunk sits open on the floor by the foot of the bed.

The bars are where Desdemona hones her Tumble skill. The bed conceals a trap door that opens into a short shaft with a ladder leading down to another trap door in the ceiling of area **C5**. A DC 20 Listen check reveals the sounds of pursuit and combat below the tunnel. If the PCs follow they end up in area **C5**.

Treasure: The trunk is filled with leather and cotton clothing, masterwork thieves' tools, a purse full of six emeralds (500 gp each), an exquisite pair of sapphire earrings in the shape of dolphins (2,000 gp value, a gift from Thaddius, and priceless to Desdemona), and a golden statuette in the shape of an archer (1,500 gp value).

C11. Thaddius's Personal Chambers

This large room contains a featherbed covered with dozens of down pillows and a bright crimson duvet. Wooden bedposts carved in the shape of satyrs reach up to the ceiling, where a mirror is mounted above the bed. Three large dressing closets line the south wall next to a tall mirror. An enormous fireplace crackles and pops, keeping the chamber warm. A small reading table is located on the east wall by a window. Daylight shines through the window, which

overlooks a small courtyard littered with blocks of marble and broken statues.

The window is an illusion, and the scene visible through it changes every few minutes. When the PCs enter, the window looks out on the serene ruins of an ancient temple of Pelor. A few moments later it shimmers briefly before becoming the view of a rocky coast with storm clouds on the horizon, complete with the sound of crashing waves and distant thunder. The tall mirror is actually an *illusory wall*. Behind it is a tunnel that connects to a trapdoor in the hydra chamber of area **C3**.

In the third dressing closet a secret panel slides open to reveal an inner closet where Thaddius stores jewelry. The *mask of diamond tears* was housed within. Thaddius's vanity allowed the mask to fall into Ritharius's hands. Thaddius mounted a small mirror inside so he could examine himself bedecked in jewels. Skreetvreet peered through from the Plane of Mirrors and snatched the mask.

Creatures: Thaddius is standing by the third dressing closet when the PCs enter, frantically searching for the missing mask. Distressed, he attempts to speak to the PCs unless attacked immediately. He explains the history of the mask and asks them to help him retrieve it. He had no idea what the mask was capable of when he stole it and only learned of its powers after Ritharius arrived. He was able to put the ethergaunt off for a time by pretending to be interested in selling the mask (while actually planning to slay or repel the outsider). When the PCs first arrived, fear of incarceration caused him to attempt to drive them off. Now that he has lost the mask, he turns to them for help if they'll listen.

Tannenbaum is not alone. Thaddius Willowedge, a mirrored version of Tannenbaum, arrives shortly after the party and observes from the mirror above the bed.

Thaddius Tannenbaum: hp 48; see page 79.

Thaddius Willowedge: hp 85; see page 84.

Tactics: If the PCs ambush Thaddius, or attack him before he can speak, he defends himself. After discovering the mask was missing he cast the following spells on himself: *mage armor, protection from energy (electricity), shield,* and *mirror image,* in that order. Thaddius should have a good handle on the PCs' abilities if the encounter in **C3** has already taken place. In the first round Thaddius Quick Draws his dagger and casts *maze* on the most dangerous opponent. He then hurls *phantasmal killer* and *baleful polymorph.*

After the fourth round of combat, or after Thaddius is nearly finished with his story about the ethergaunts, Willowedge emerges from the mirror as a move action and sneak attacks the illusionist. If Tannenbaum perishes, Willowedge retreats through the mirror. If Thaddius is badly wounded in the fight (brought below 5 hp), he attempts to *teleport* away to his laboratory.

Development: If Willowedge is slain and Thaddius is still alive, he asks the PCs to help him stop Ritharius. If he discovers the PCs killed Desdemona with their own hands and destroyed her *clone,* he swears vengeance against them openly, promising to slay them once they deal with the ethergaunt together. If Thaddius is slain with his *clone* intact, he pops up later.

Treasure: Five diamond rings (worth 800 gp each) and a ruby and platinum necklace (1,200 gp) are kept in the compartment in the third dressing closet. Thaddius's *crystal ball* is also here.

C12. Cloak Room

This closet contains nothing but crimson and black cloaks. An *illusory wall* hides a secret door. Behind the wall a metal ladder ascends to the observatory.

C13. Observatory (EL varies)

This stone platform appears to be the roof of Thaddius chateau, as the nighttime firmament hangs overhead with stars and moon twinkling down.

The night sky with its twinkling stars is an illusion. The glamer on this large domed chamber changes every few moments to show the nighttime sky at different times of year, with different constellations of stars and phases of the moon.

Creatures: Ritharius awaits the PCs here. He is a tall, thin creature in white robes with spindly arms and legs. The ethergaunt intends to test the power of the mask on the PCs. Once the PCs enter the room, he pulls mirrored versions of them from the mask. The mirrored versions of the PCs appear immediately and attempt to square off with their Material Plane counterparts.

RITHARIUS **CR 15**

Male white ethergaunt wizard 2
Fiend Folio 67
NE Medium aberration (extraplanar)
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., total vision; Listen +17, Spot +17
Languages Abyssal, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Ignan, Infernal, Khen-zai, Nerra
Aura stupefying gaze (DC 16)

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20
hp 85 (100 with *false life*) (13 HD)
Immune arcane spell immunity (4th-level and lower)
Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft.
Melee etherblade +9 (1d10)
Ranged ray of force +13 ranged touch (1d6)
Special Actions enslave (DC 16)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +9
Combat Gear scroll of *plane shift*
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 15th [CL 17 to overcome SR], +13 ranged touch)
8th—empowered *chain lightning* (DC 27), *polar ray*
7th—*finger of death* (DC 27), *forcecage, greater teleport*
6th—*acid fog, chain lightning* (DC 27), *disintegrate* (DC 26), *greater dispel magic, true seeing*
5th—*cone of cold* (DC 26), *dominate person* (DC 25), *hold monster* (DC 25), empowered *lightning bolt* (DC 24), *seeming* (DC 25), *wall of force*
4th—*dimension door, enervation, shout* (DC 25), *fire shield* (DC 25), *greater invisibility, stoneskin*
3rd—*dispel magic, clairvoyance/clairaudience, fireball* (DC 24), *lightning*

bolt (DC 24), *protection from energy*, *slow* (DC 23)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *false life* (2), *glitterdust* (DC 22), *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*

1st—*disguise self*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*

0—*acid splash*, *detect magic* (2), *read magic*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 31, Wis 17, Cha 12

SQ material jaunt

Feats Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (etherblade), Extend Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration

Skills Concentration +18, Diplomacy +16, Heal +17, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (local) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +26, Spot +17, Survival +9

Possessions combat gear, etherblade (as halberd that can fire rays of force as ranged touch attacks with a 40-foot range increment), *mask of diamond tears*, flowing white robes, 250 gp worth of diamond dust, 250 gp worth of ointment for *true seeing*, 1,500 gp worth of ruby dust

Enslave (Su) Three times per day, Ritharius can attempt to enslave any one living creature within 20 feet. This ablity functions as a *dominate monster* spell, CL 16th, Will save DC 16 negates. The subject may attempt a new Will save each day, or a *remove curse* or successful *dispel magic* breaks the ethergaunt's control. The effect ends if the creature is more than 1 mile away from Ritharius, or if he travels to another plane. Ethergaunts may control a number of slaves equal to their Charisma bonus (1 for Ritharius).

Material Jaunt (Su) Ritharius can transport himself from the Ethereal to the Material plane as a standard action and stay on the Material plane for 1 round per HD before he must return to the Ethereal Plane for at least an hour. Ritharius does not use this ability during the adventure, relying instead on *plane shift*.

Stupefying Gaze (Su) When Ritharius exposes his face from behind the *mask of diamond tears* (a free action), any creature (except other ethergaunts) within 30 feet that looks at him must make a DC 16 Will save or take 1d4 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma damage. A creature that successfully saves against this ability is immune to that ethergaunt's stupefying gaze for 24 hours.

Total Vision (Ex) Ritharius' super-developed brain and numerous facial organs allow him to discern all creatures and objects within 40 feet without making Spot or Listen checks.

Mirrored PCs: hp variable; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: Ritharius is not interested in fighting the PCs himself, at least not at first. He wants to see how the mirrored creatures fare against their counterparts without his intervention. He casts *forcecage* (10-foot windowless cell) around himself, then *true seeing* to casually observe the battle. Ritharius does, however, open his facemask to reveal the horrific morass of facial features and orifices, affecting all combatants with his stupefying gaze.

The mirrored creatures fight to the death, as the destruction of their Material Plane counterparts is their only hope for escape from eternal imprisonment on the Plane of Mirrors. If a mirrored creature destroys its PC counterpart it attempts to flee.

If all the mirrored creatures are destroyed, Ritharius casts *mage armor, shield, bear's endurance, false life, protection from energy* (appropriate to what he sees the PCs using), *fire shield*, and *stoneskin*. He then drops the *forcecage* to battle the PCs. He immediately lays into the PCs with his empowered *chain lightning*, followed by *polar ray*. He continues pummeling the PCs with the most powerful evocation spells at his disposal every round. His rage turns to fear if he is reduced to less than 20 hp and he attempts to teleport away and take his time reading his scroll of *plane shift* to return to the Ethereal Plane.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs destroy Thaddius's and Desdemona's *clones* and slay the pair, Talantier's elite are outraged. The punishment for theft is not death in Talantier, and Thaddius was a very popular personage about town. His death does not sit well with the Talantier Art Scholar Society or with many of his lady loves. If the PCs killed Thaddius and Desdemona and failed to retrieve the mask or any concrete evidence of the two's wrongdoing, then they find themselves charged with murder and hunted by the town guard.

If the PCs bring Thaddius to justice without the mask, the illusionist and Desdemona avoid punishment due to lack of evidence. If the PCs defeat Ritharius, recover the mask, and bring Thaddius and Desdemona to justice, then the pair of criminals are sent to prison for a few years.

Meanwhile, if any of the mirrored creatures killed their counterparts, they begin wreaking havoc on the PCs' lives. Dead PCs may be raised only to discover their mirrored creature has ruined relationships and committed crimes in their name. Finally, this incident may signal the beginning of an ethergaunt incursion onto the Material Plane, as the mysterious extraplanar beings continue to plague the PCs.

Appendix 1: Mask of Diamond Tears

This mother-of-pearl mask is oddly shaped to fit the facial structure of an ethergaunt. The eyes are two flawless ovular gemstones (one deep green emerald, one crimson ruby) and the cheeks are adorned with teardrop-shaped diamond studs. The wearer of the mask may target creatures within 100 feet and draw upon the nerra's mirror prisons to call forth mirrored versions of the targets. A mirrored creature is the same as the target, but from an alternate Material Plane. The mirrored creatures made a deal with their conquerors in order to survive, vowing to serve the ethergaunts by destroying their counterparts on other Material Planes. When called forth through the mask, mirrored creatures attempt to destroy their counterparts in order to take their place. Only one mirrored creature per target can be called forth each week. To create mirrored creatures, see the template below.

Strong conjuration; CL 20th; Weight 3 lb.

Appendix 2: The Mirrored Creature Template

The mirrored creatures pulled forth from the *mask of diamond tears* are the same as the target of the mask but are subject to changes based on the different circumstances of their home plane and their divergent life choices.

Thaddius Willowedge

Thaddius Willowedge was the target of a great deal of animosity from other children growing up. Thaddius's mother had the favor of a local Talantier aristocrat from the esteemed Tannenbaum family, but when an exotic sylvan ranger came through town, she fell madly in love with him. The elf soon moved on, leaving her with a child: Thaddius.

Thaddius's mother died shortly after his twelfth birthday. Left to his own devices and filled with hatred, Willowedge turned to crime. When his plane was conquered by the ethergaunts, he offered his services to the powerful outsiders with hopes of making a new life for himself on another plane.

Thaddius Willowedge **CR 15**
Male half-elf rogue 15
CE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +9; **Senses** Listen +15, Spot +13
Languages Common, Elven, Giant, Goblin, Orc
AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14; improved uncanny dodge
hp 85 (15 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8; evasion, slippery mind
Spd 30 ft.; spider climb
Melee +3 *wounding punch dagger* +19/+14/+9 (1d4+2 plus wounding)
Ranged mwk dagger +17/+12 (1d4–1)
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Quick Draw, crippling strike, sneak attack +8d6,
Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*, *wand of charm person* (22 charges), *wand of scorching ray* (19 charges)
Abilities Str 9, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 10
SQ mirror jump, trapfinding, trap sense +5
Feats Blind Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Magical Aptitude, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +17, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Decipher Script +9, Disable Device +11, Disguise +14 (+16 acting), Escape Artist +21, Forgery +12, Gather Information +8, Hide +21, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +23, Open Lock +15, Search +11, Sense Motive +9, Spot +13, Use Magic Device +17, Spellcraft +5
Possessions combat gear, +3 *wounding punch dagger*, two masterwork daggers, *bracers of armor +4*, *gloves of Dexterity +2*, *cloak of arachnida*, fine silk black trousers and jacket, soft leather boots

Ravenclaw

The mirrored Desdemona's life changed forever when the Talantier on her plane was overrun by a zealous order of evil monks called the Sect of the Dark Star. This doomsday cult recruited Desdemona because of her natural athletic ability. She took to their teachings and became a fanatical believer in the sect's rhetoric, eventually leaving her name behind in exchange for her religious moniker of Ravenclaw.

Ravenclaw **CR 14**
Female human monk 14
LE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +15, Spot +5
Languages Common
AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 21; Snatch Arrows

hp 80 (14 HD)
Immune poison, non-supernatural disease
SR 24
Fort +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14 (+16 vs. enchantment); improved evasion

Spd 70 ft.
Melee unarmed +16/+16/+16/+11 (2d6+5/19–20)
Ranged +4 *shocking shuriken* +15/+15/+15/+10 (1d2+6 plus 1d6 electricity)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Improved Disarm, Quick Draw, Stunning Fist (14/day, DC 22), ki strike (magic and lawful)
Special Actions abundant step 1/day, wholeness of body (28 hp per day)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 8
SQ mirror jump, slow fall (70 ft.)
Feats Deflect Arrows, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Stunning Fist, Snatch Arrows, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)
Skills Balance +13, Climb +12, Concentration +5, Hide +11, Jump +13, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +11, Tumble +9
Possessions 20 +4 *shocking shuriken*, *ring of protection +4*, *amulet of mighty fists +3*, gray robes and pants, sandals

Creating a Mirrored Creature

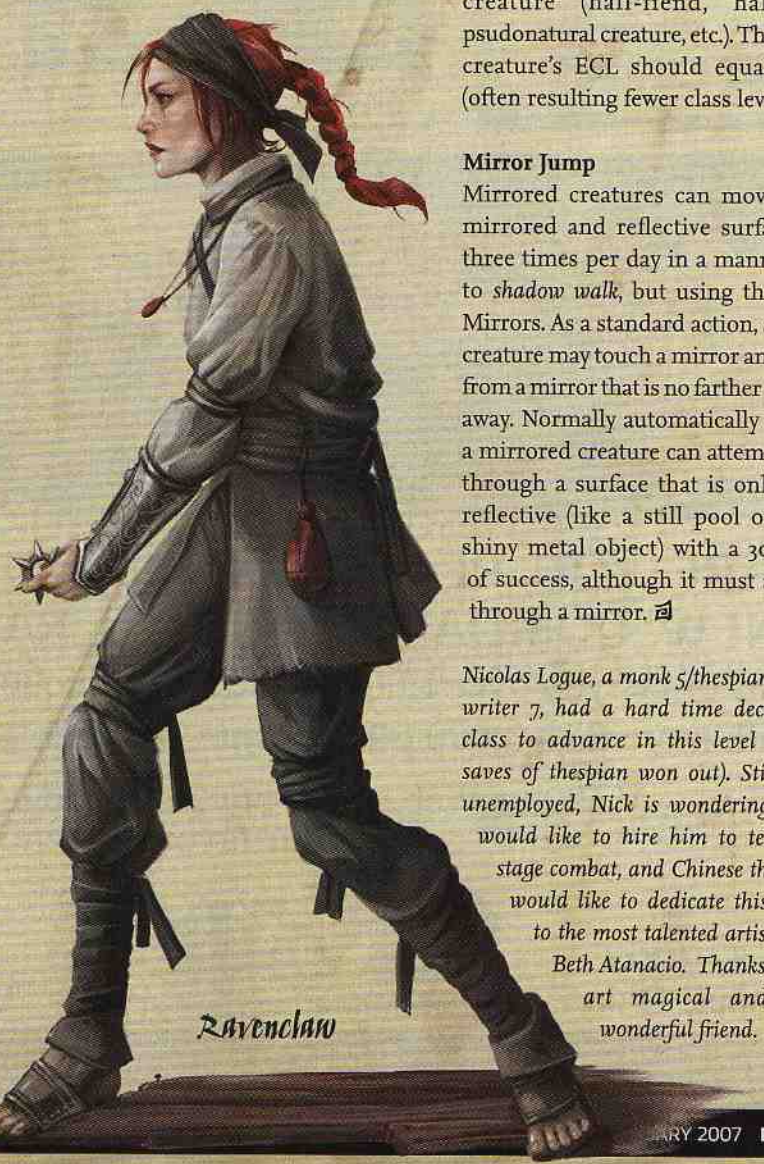
"Mirrored" is an unusual template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid that currently exists on the Material Plane. Unlike a normal template, a mirrored creature does not represent an enhanced or modified version of the base creature. Instead, the template creates an alternate version of the creature based on different circumstances or choices the creature may have experienced in an alternate version of the Material Plane. All mirrored creatures have one thing in common: they seek to destroy their counterparts on other Material Planes.

All mirrored creatures are evil. A mirrored creature is always the same effective character level (ECL) as the target. You should design alternate PCs that are tailor-made for your players. Use the following suggestions as guidelines.

Racial Alteration
A racial alteration results from different circumstances and choices taken by the mirrored creature's parents. A human target of the mask may yield a half-elf or half-orc mirrored creature. A halfling may become a different subrace. The racial aberration should be slight and easy to explain.

Character Class Alteration
If the mirrored character's class changes, reassign the creature's original ability scores to match his new class. Generate the mirrored creature's base attack bonus, saves, hit points, skills, feats, and class features as appropriate for his new class.

Drastic Alteration
Sometimes an alternate plane's situation is remarkably divergent. Fiends from the Nine Hells may have crushed the home plane of the mirrored creature. Lycanthropy may have spread unchecked, or transdimesional energies may have infused the plane's residents with chaotic mutations. Feel free to use your imagination in creating the exact nature of the drastic aberration. It may involve applying a template to the mirrored creature (half-fiend, half-dragon, psudonatural creature, etc.). The mirrored creature's ECL should equal the PC's (often resulting fewer class levels).



Scaling the Adventure

Adjusting "Mask of Diamond Tears" for parties of higher or lower level is simple. Adjust the levels of the NPCs in the adventure accordingly and follow these guidelines:

11th–12th: Subtract two xills from C2, and make the cryohydra in C3 a ten headed one.

14th–15th: Add two xills to C2, and give the cryohydra in area C3 the half dragon template.

Mirror Jump
Mirrored creatures can move through mirrored and reflective surfaces up to three times per day in a manner similar to *shadow walk*, but using the Plane of Mirrors. As a standard action, a mirrored creature may touch a mirror and then exit from a mirror that is no farther than 1 mile away. Normally automatically successful, a mirrored creature can attempt to jump through a surface that is only partially reflective (like a still pool of water or shiny metal object) with a 30% chance of success, although it must always exit through a mirror.

Nicolas Logue, a monk 5/thespian 7/freelance writer 7, had a hard time deciding what class to advance in this level (the higher saves of thespian won out). Still gainfully unemployed, Nick is wondering if anyone would like to hire him to teach acting, stage combat, and Chinese theater. Nick would like to dedicate this adventure to the most talented artist he knows: Beth Atanacio. Thanks for making art magical and being a wonderful friend.

THE PERFECT CHASE

BY WOLFGANG BAUR,
BY KYLE HUNTER,

If it was all about speed, chases in the movies would be just like races in the Olympics: A starting gun, some running, and a winner. But that's not how a chase works in a movie or a book. Any flick with a decent chase scene has obstacles, reversals, near misses, high speeds, and deadly consequences. The *Dungeon Master's Guide II* has a few things to say about chases, but it only scratches the surface. Why doesn't D&D do chase scenes better? It can, and it's fairly easy to set up.

SETTING UP THE CHASE

One of the hardest things about chase scenes is getting them started—after all, you can say, "The villain runs out the door," but the party may or may not choose to pursue. Likewise, RPG players are notorious (well, in design circles, anyway) for being slow to retreat, much less letting themselves be chased. So you need to make it obvious, at least when the party is supposed to pursue.

When you are hoping for a chase with the PCs in pursuit, you can simply tell the players, "This is a chase scene—who's going after him?" Every player at the table knows what a chase is, and usually that's enough to get a party off to the races. Alternately, you can use an insult, a sneering "you'll never catch me!", or a mocking laugh to

bait the PCs. Finally, theft from the party is almost a guarantee of a chase scene, in my experience.

MAKING THEM RUN

When the party should be trying to escape, it's harder to guarantee that they'll actually run. After all, heroes shouldn't be fleeing all that often. This is where your powers of persuasion matter: you're the DM, and you can describe the situation as heroically challenging or potentially suicidal.

For instance, describing a gathering of angry villagers seeking revenge for a rogue's trickery might just make the bard or paladin want to "explain" things to the deluded peasants. Describing a mob shouting for blood and led by the village blacksmith, a mountain of a man who wears a set of full plate and wields a flaming hammer, might make a different impression, especially when a PC or henchman with Knowledge (local) notes that the villagers are known for taking justice into their own hands. Once the party decides to leave town, even by stealth, a shout of "There they go!" and the roar of the inflamed mob should be enough.

Note that this example uses a few tricks to scare your players. Having an NPC express fear is an old trick, but it works—players often assume that henchman are stand-ins for the DM's opinion. Piling on rich detail and related incidents suggests that maybe the DM doesn't want the PCs to fight. In combat, the arrival of massive reinforcements when the party is already struggling may convince a group of usually bold adventurers to retire from the field.

That last point is worth repeating: sheer numbers are scary, so describe hundreds or thousands of foes, as thick as the goblin armies in the Halls of Moria in *Lord of the Rings*. Better still, use Tolkien's trick and have the small foes scatter and flee as the big foe approaches. I think of this as the "thundering footsteps of the balrog" technique, but any monster that shakes the earth and sends creatures into panicked flight works. In the worst case, a PC decides to hold the bridge at Khazad-Dûm so the rest of the party can escape. At least it's a memorable death.

MECHANICS FOR SPEED

The mechanics for chases in D&D are underdeveloped; the word "chase" doesn't even appear in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* index. But these scenes are fun, and can be seamlessly connected with retreats, ambushes, thefts, or even abductions.

One possible solution is to create a Run skill to parallel Swim, Climb, and Ride, but that doesn't address the underlying problems. Mechanically, every character has the exact same band of running speeds (so there's no room for heroic effort), and movement is done by turns (so there's no sense of pushing to something just out of reach). Mind you, defined movement and action by turns are great for tactical minis combat, but they are deadly boring for a chase. To make your chases more thrilling, try these optional rules.

No Initiative

The best way to make chases more exciting is use a chase mode without initiative. Instead of going around the table, all characters and foes move at the same time, and each runner or pursuer takes one or two squares of movement at the same time. Every character takes run actions without combat rolls or attacks of opportunity. When a character has no more squares of movement, he or she waits until other characters complete their moves. You can use this system with 5-foot squares, but it works better with 10-foot squares.

For instance, a halfling in light armor and a human in plate are chasing a frost giant in leather armor. Each round, the halfling moves eight 10-foot squares with a quadruple move action, while the human moves 6 squares because heavy armor allows him only to triple his speed. The hill giant moves 16 squares. Unless someone on a fast horse cuts that giant off at the pass, he's getting away. This system has the side benefit of encouraging the PCs to take ranks in Ride, and makes fast mounts even more valuable.

RUNNING SPEED: 10' SQUARES BY BASE MOVEMENT SPEED

Armor	40 ft.	30 ft.	20 ft.
Light Armor	16	12	8
Medium Armor	12	8	6
Heavy Armor	8	6	4

Ability Modifiers to Chase Speed

In a sprint, Dexterity ought to count, since it governs initiative and how quickly you react to situations. In a longer race, Constitution should help with raw staying power. For each +1 ability bonus, a character gains +1 square of movement in a chase. Together with the simultaneous movement system above, this means our halfling friend sprints +4 squares each chase round. He can keep up with the giant—for a little while. After the 4 sprinting rounds, our group tires, and Constitution bonuses apply from that point on. The sprinters fade, and the sturdy dwarves or tough barbarians get a shot at catching the foe.

Why 4 rounds? It's about the length of time for a dash, and it roughly equals a standard combat. Most chases should be decided quickly; if the sprinters wear out, the middle-distance runners can grind it out.

Armor penalties should apply. Any character wearing full plate can gain only 1 square from Dexterity. Dexterity penalties also slow a sprinter. Subtract 1 square from running speed per –1 Dexterity modifier, to a minimum of 1 square.

Relative Distance and Zero Lines

Another solution to the problem of identical speeds is relative distance. That is, instead of counting squares covered by each participant in the chase, only their relative positions matter. Put the pursuers near a "zero line" or starting line, and the runner ahead of it. The quarry should get at least half their base speed as a head start. Then each round, the slowest creature doesn't move at all; they are the standard against which other creatures move ahead.

For instance, a dwarf in full plate moves 45 feet at a dead run, a monk runs 160 feet, and a dexterous elf in elvin chain moves 130 feet. They are chasing a villainous greater barghest. The dwarf stays on

the zero line unless he ups his Dexterity or somehow sheds his armor. The monk moves 12 of our 10-foot squares forward (160 minus 45), and the elf moves 9. If the greater barghest moves 90 feet and had a 20-foot head start, the monk could catch it in the first round. If it is unarmored and runs 160 feet, as the monk does, it will quickly leave the dwarf and elf behind. This system requires some calculations in the first round (subtracting the slowest runner from the base speeds of everyone else), but is quicker in the subsequent rounds.

The zero line is especially useful for mounted or flying chases, which often have fewer obstacles and where raw speed is the main element of success. In those cases, the only check each round is likely to be the DC 15 Ride check to spur the mount for extra speed. I'd recommend offering a DC 30 Ride to spur a mount to +20 feet as well.

Aiding Another

It seems like aid another and chases would go together well, but "running" isn't a skill and it's difficult to help the slowest member of the party. The best option is the spell *haste*. If that's not available, use a DC 15 Strength check to decide whether a character can help a creature one size category smaller run faster. If the check succeeds, the smaller creature gets an extra square of movement. If the check fails, the larger creature loses a square. Carrying rather than just helping a creature might drop the carrying character's speed a notch, depending on encumbrance.

Catching Up

When a pursuer catches their quarry by entering their square, roll initiative normally. If the quarry wins, they put on a burst of speed to step one square away the first time he is "caught" in a chase round (if two or more pursuers enter his square, there's no escape).

If the pursuer still has movement left when the quarry zips ahead, he can catch the runner one square further along. If the pursuer wins the initiative, combat or grapples happen normally, and the chase mode ends for those two creatures. Other characters can decide whether to get involved in that fight or continue in chase mode.

Escaping

When the party is running, they'll often want to escape into the nearest cover or cast an *invisibility* spell, especially if they have slower members that cannot pick up the pace. Hide attempts and spellcasting can take place normally to end a chase if a character is out of sight.

CHASES AND DRAMA

Of course, better chase mechanics are all very nice, but what you really want is great chase flavor. In this case, look to Hollywood. Chases in movies are about who jumps, balances, teeters, turns, climbs, flies, leaps, and dives fastest and best—and who survives the inevitable reversals. The chase is won or lost when the road changes, the river turns to rapids, or the drawbridge goes up.

Winnowing Obstacles

Skills come into play when heroes must overcome hurdles, walls, moats, or other obstacles. The strongest character may not run fast, but he can leap across the chasm, ford the river, or pull down the drawbridge by hauling on the chains with sheer brawn.

In this style of chase, speed is just the start. The chase "winner" overcomes the most obstacles: snake pits, surging crowds, slippery floors, or a narrow walkway over lava. If an NPC is running, you know what obstacles will be encountered and in what order. You can prepare a description of the obstacle and pre-roll the NPC's success or failure for each one. Then you can set up the Balance, Climb, Jump, and maybe Ride checks for the heroes to keep up. If they can't, the villain escapes.

Long Chases

Not every chase is over in a few rounds. Some ship chases or mounted chases can last for days; hunting a devilish fiend over burning sands by camelback is more likely to use the benefits granted by the Track feat than those granted by the Run feat. For long chases, you still want to build up drama with glimpses of the target in the distance (or pursuing hordes). Often, these are mounted chases, so substitute Ride ranks for Dexterity modifiers and miles for squares.

While the basic idea is the same, maintaining suspense is a lot harder for a long chase. A couple of ambushes, a boulder rolled down a hill, or a detour into a pit of ghouls by night (with the first rider through riling them up, and the second group having to fight them) can certainly liven things up. Which brings us to the issue of reversals.

Reversals

If just jumping or climbing bores you, the NPC could make some obstacles much harder after he negotiates his way across. For instance, he could spill oil onto a beam over a lava pit, or set it on fire. Better still, the villain could create threats to bystanders by releasing a basket of scorpions in a good-aligned temple or pushing a villager into a well. The heroes must then choose whether to continue the chase or save innocent lives. Even if some party members keep up the chase, the villain has improved his odds, and made pursuit more difficult.

I recommend at least one reversal per chase, just to keep players sharp. Even if they have all the buffs and all the optimizations you could want for sheer speed, true heroes choose to save the woman drowning in the well every time. But it will make them hate the villain that much more.

CONCLUSION

The perfect chase scene can be both easy to run and a nice change of pace from combat encounters, skill encounters, or social encounters. Give it a little prep time and think about what the most dramatic moment could be so you can make it the centerpiece of your chase.

Wolfgang Baur is a noted adventure designer and the author of "Steam & Brass," a private commission written for patrons. He discusses his freelance work and upcoming patron projects at wolfgangbaur.com.

OPEN SESAME

BY MICHAEL KORTES
BY KYLE HUNTER

Secret doors are a mainstay of Dungeons & Dragons—those little "S" marks have been appearing on maps since the beginning. Unfortunately, familiarity breeds contempt, and today the mystery and excitement of finding a secret door in a dungeon is so mundane that they seem almost as boring as normal doors.

With a little work, you can transform those revolving bookshelves and sliding stone walls back into something mysterious and memorable. Detailed here are five examples of how you can dress up your secret doors and make them as exciting as the mysteries they hide.

KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING

Even after a DC 20 Search check locates it, the hidden portal in this chamber's ceiling remains securely shut, with no visible lock. A DC 15 Search of the empty fireplace in the room below, however, reveals a tiny compartment hidden beneath a loose flagstone in the hearth. Inside the hollow space is a long, thin vial half-filled with mercury. The vial's glass exterior is marked with both numbers and symbols. A successful DC 15 Decipher Script check confirms that the markings indicate gradients of temperature. Further inspection reveals that the vial is connected to a series of gears that disappear into the stonework beneath the floor.

When heated, the mercury expands to fill the vial, which trips a switch buried deep in the floor. This in turn causes the secret door in the ceiling to iris open with a grinding roar. A concentrated source of heat placed next to the vial,

such as the heat from a torch or a *produce flame* spell, causes the mercury to expand in two rounds.

Building a fire inside the fireplace gradually generates enough heat to safely trigger the door in 10 minutes. This latter technique opens the secret door even if the mercury hidden in the hearth has not been found. The door closes and reseals as soon as the mercury cools to room temperature.

THE HAND MAIDENS

An alcove in this room contains four doll-sized white marble statuettes of elven maidens, each worth 75 gp. The delicate hands and fingers of each maiden are arranged in elaborate postures, as though the elves were spellcasting or perhaps participating in a ritual dance. Close inspection of the figurines reveals darker imagery in their garb, with one of the maidens dressed in a gown with a spider motif. This may lead the PCs to deduce that the carvings are actually drow women.

If the players do not already suspect it once the racial resemblance is uncovered, a DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Decipher Script check reveals that the hands of the figurines spell out words in drow sign language. If the PCs do not have a party member among them who can understand this language, the actual meaning of the signs may be deciphered with a *comprehend languages* spell or a DC 25 Decipher Script check for each figurine. In order, the hands of the four statuettes depict the words "door," "floor," "northwest," and "corner."

There is, in fact, a seamless trapdoor in the floor of the northwest corner of the room. If the PCs are armed with the statuettes' clues they can concentrate their search, reducing the Search DC from 30 to 10.

THE STARS ARE ALIGNED

The hidden panel in the wall of this room (DC 20 Search check) can only be opened by manipulating a bronze orrery (a mechanical, wheelwork model of the solar system) that rests upon a dusty darkwood desk. Anyone moving the arms of the orrery with care may make a DC 15 Listen check to hear a tiny internal "click" when certain stellar bodies rotate past set positions.

Once first detected, a DC 25 Listen check enables a PC to crack the complete code by listening to the vibrations of the gears inside the mechanism. Alternatively, carefully opening up the orrery's base with a DC 20 Disable Device check and inspecting the gears also reveals its secret with a DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check. The correct arrangement causes the secret door to suddenly split and glide open with a dull sigh. The exact combination of planetary positions that releases the door may be tailored to have significance to the campaign or adventure's setting. Examples include the position of the heavens on the date of an ancient calamity or famous battle.

THE ANTS GO MARCHING

A massive ant farm encased behind a thin sheet of glass dominates the west wall of this room. Anyone observing the copper-colored ants at work may make a DC 30 Search check. Success detects a tiny, metallic trigger-switch in one of the twisting tunnels of dirt. The trigger may be tripped by the random passage of one of the ants, causing the room's east wall to rapidly descend into the floor, permitting passage until the switch automatically resets a minute later. Due to the farm's size, however, there is only a cumulative 5% chance per hour that an ant will trip the switch randomly. Dropping strategically placed food through the feeding hatch on top of the farm, however, increases this cumulative chance to 10% per minute as ants investigate the smell of food. Alternatively, the switch might be triggered manually by threading something long and flexible, such as a thieves' tool, through the hatch and into the winding dirt tunnels (DC 35 Disable Device check).

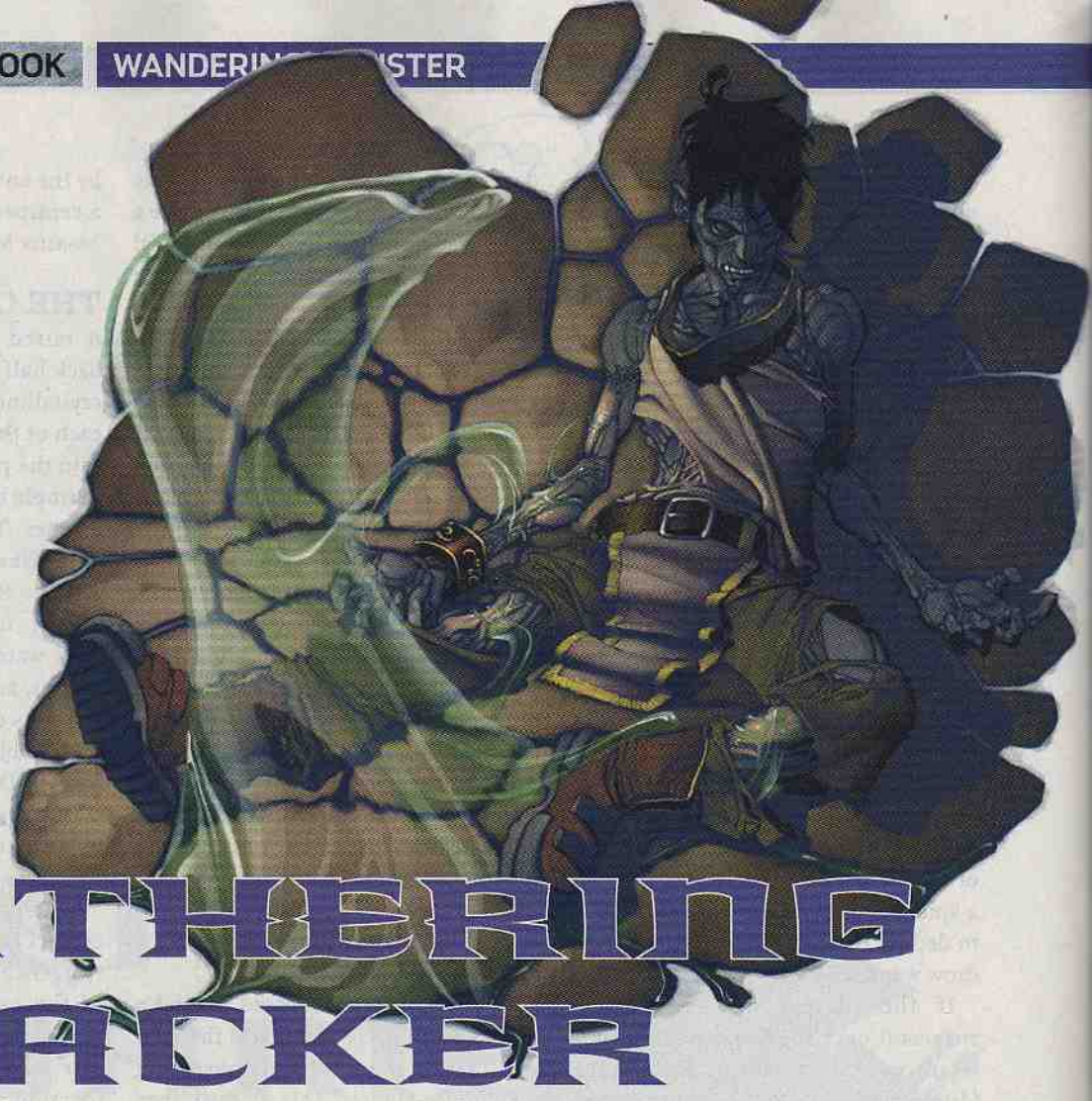
Breaking the farm's outer glass or leaving the hatch open for longer than a minute results in an aggressive attack by the ant colony (use the statistics for a centipede swarm on page 238 of the *Monster Manual*).

THE OPENING SONG

A raised pool of water rests in the back half of this huge hall. Four large crystalline goblets (50 gp each) rest upon each of the pool's four corners. Etched into the pool's border is the music for a simple but haunting song using only 4 notes. The tune can be deciphered with either a DC 20 Decipher Script or a DC 10 Perform check of any musical variety. If the four goblets are filled with water from the pool to precise depths, running a moist finger across the rims or tapping the goblets with a metal object can reproduce the eerie song. A DC 20 Perform check enables a PC to correctly judge the amount of water needed in each goblet to replicate the notes.

When the goblets are played in the correct sequence, the completed song triggers a hidden glyph at the bottom of the pool, which in turn triggers a *control water* spell (caster level 10). The water in the pool slowly rises, forming a translucent, square pillar, that extends all the way to the 20-foot-high ceiling. The water holds its position for one minute, then slowly lowers back down.

A secret passageway rests over the ceiling, directly above the pool, accessible only by a *phase door* spell. The tiny ceiling tile that must be depressed to activate the *phase door* is nearly impossible to find, as it is hopelessly lost in the hundreds of similar aquamarine tiles that make up the mosaic blanketing the ceiling. However, once the tile that opens the door has been moistened, as it will be should the water pillar be activated, the tile turns a rusty red and is easily distinguished with a DC 5 Spot check. When the correct tile is touched, the *phase door* is activated, and a five-foot square of tile in the ceiling appears to slowly disintegrate away, revealing a chamber above. The PCs can enter by swimming up the pillar of water before it descends back into the pool.



SLITHERING TRACKER

BY JAMES JACOBS
BY UDON

What at first seemed to be a shimmering layer of moisture along the wall suddenly slithers into action, mounding up in the center like a shuddering pile of transparent slime. A whip-like tendril extrudes from the edge of the mass, cracking in the air as it lashes out at anything that moves.

The slithering tracker is an intelligent ooze typically found in damp underground areas close to prime hunting grounds. The sewers of large cities are favored haunts of these murderous creatures, as are ruins and other dungeon areas inhabited by large numbers of humanoids. Solitary creatures, they generally avoid territory claimed by other slithering trackers, but are often found in areas where other oozes are common. In fact, it's not unusual to find a slithering tracker dwelling in the lair of a larger (often unintelligent or simply unobservant) monster, where they are overlooked as pools of water. The slithering tracker waits for the beast to sleep or depart, then sucks dry any morsels the monster left behind.

As intelligent creatures, slithering trackers sometimes form alliances with tribes of humanoids or even thieves' guilds. In return for regular offerings of food and a safe place to dwell, a tracker serves its allies as a scout or assassin.

Slithering trackers cannot speak, but understand Common.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

A slithering tracker relies upon stealth and deception to secure prey. Most creatures don't notice a tracker at rest, mis-

taking it for a shallow puddle of water. Once an appealing target passes by, the creature follows at a distance, using Track to pursue its prey and waiting until its chosen victim falls asleep or is otherwise distracted before slithering close enough to strike with a tendril. If outnumbered, a slithering tracker typically tries to escape by moving and hiding, spreading itself so thin as to resemble little more than condensation on a wall. The slithering tracker's transparency allows it to make Hide checks even when there's no other cover or concealment in the area.

ECOLOGY

It's unusual for an ooze to develop anything resembling a mind, and the enigma of the slithering tracker has confounded sages for many years. Some believe that they are simply a naturally-occurring anomaly, while others have darker theories that place the creation of the first slithering trackers on the shoulders of ancient wizards or cultists of Juiblex. Certain legends seem to support these latter assertions, particularly the tales of the Cult of Hollow Hunger. This sinister cult of necromancers practiced vile rituals in which they completely removed the bones of their enemies, transforming them into hulking masses of jelly-like flesh. According to these tales, what remained of these slobbering servitors after their flesh decayed was a hateful swath of protoplasm composed of the dead body's infused fluids. The fact that slithering trackers themselves aren't undead creatures casts some doubt upon this theory, however.

There are also tales of abnormally large slithering trackers dwelling in the deep recesses of the Underdark. Such monsters are said to lurk around the edges of great underground civilizations, and are often worshiped as gods by the more savage denizens of those regions (such as chitines or troglodytes). The larger these slithering trackers grow, the less likely they are to hunt for themselves, preferring to manipulate other creatures into serving them in such ways and demanding regular offerings of living sacrifice.

SLITHERING TRACKER LORE

Knowledge (dungeoneering)

DC	Result
14	What appears to be a strangely mobile pool of water is actually an unusually intelligent ooze known as a slithering tracker. Its transparent body makes it difficult to spot, and grants it a significant advantage when it needs to hide.
19	The touch of a slithering tracker can paralyze a victim for several minutes.
24	A slithering tracker feeds on moisture, and can draw fluids from a living body with shocking speed. It can only feed in this manner from a victim that is helpless.
29	A slithering tracker's entire body functions like an eye; it can see in all directions at once, and is thus impossible to effectively flank.

TREASURE

The slithering tracker has no real interest or need for treasure or magical gear, but it does understand that most of the things it likes to eat covet such items. A slithering tracker that doesn't share a lair with an unsuspecting monster often leaves valuable remnants of previous victims scattered in its lair in hard-to-reach areas, such as within a niche in a wall or on a high ledge. While intruders focus on retrieving the treasure, the tracker slithers up to strike with surprise.

A typical slithering tracker has standard treasure for a creature of its CR. A normal treasure might include 700 sp, 130 gp, a silver hand mirror set with strips of moss agate and malachite worth 250 gp, a bejeweled masterwork silver dagger worth 450 gp, and a *potion of false life*. Of course, a slithering tracker that shares a lair with a larger monster has a proportionally larger treasure. To generate this treasure, simply increase the larger creature's treasure by an amount appropriate for the slithering tracker's CR.

SLITHERING TRACKER **CR 4**

Usually N Small ooze

Init +2; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft; Listen +2, Spot +10

Languages Common (cannot speak)

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11 (+1 size, +4 Dex)

hp 52 (5 HD)

Immune ooze traits

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee 4 tendrils +8 (1d3 nonlethal plus paralyzation)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** –1

Special Actions desiccation

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 6

SQ hide in plain sight

Feats Improved Trip[B], Track, Weapon Finesse

Skills Hide +16, Search +16, Spot +10, Survival +10 (+12 following tracks)

Environment Any underground

Organization Solitary

Treasure Standard

Advancement 6–10 HD (Medium), 11–15 HD (Large), 21–30 HD (Huge), 31–40 HD (Gargantuan), 41+ HD (Colossal)

All-Around Vision (Ex) A slithering tracker's entire body functions as an eye, granting it the ability to see in all directions at once. This makes it impossible to flank.

Desiccation (Ex) A slithering tracker consumes the liquid in a living creature's body. As a full-round action, a slithering tracker can flow over a helpless living creature's body to begin draining the victim's fluids. This inflicts 1d6 points of damage and dehydrates the victim, causing him to become fatigued. Plants and creatures with the water subtype take double damage from this effect. Damage caused by dehydration bypasses damage reduction and energy resistance.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex) While in any sort of moist terrain or underground, a slithering tracker can use the Hide skill even when being observed.

Paralyzation (Ex) Any creature struck by a slithering tracker must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or become paralyzed for 1d6 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills A slithering tracker gains a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Search, and Spot checks.

Downer

Fool's Errand

My old boss, the rakshasa Kalro, has put a contract out on my life and crashed a contest to crown a new god. I have little choice but to play the hand I've been dealt. I'll do what the dragon wants, and bring the Ulolok to him in Sigil. If Kalro isn't going to pay me for this crap, maybe the dragon will.

DOWNER TARANTULA, DROW

GOALKEEPER, AURUMACH RILMANI

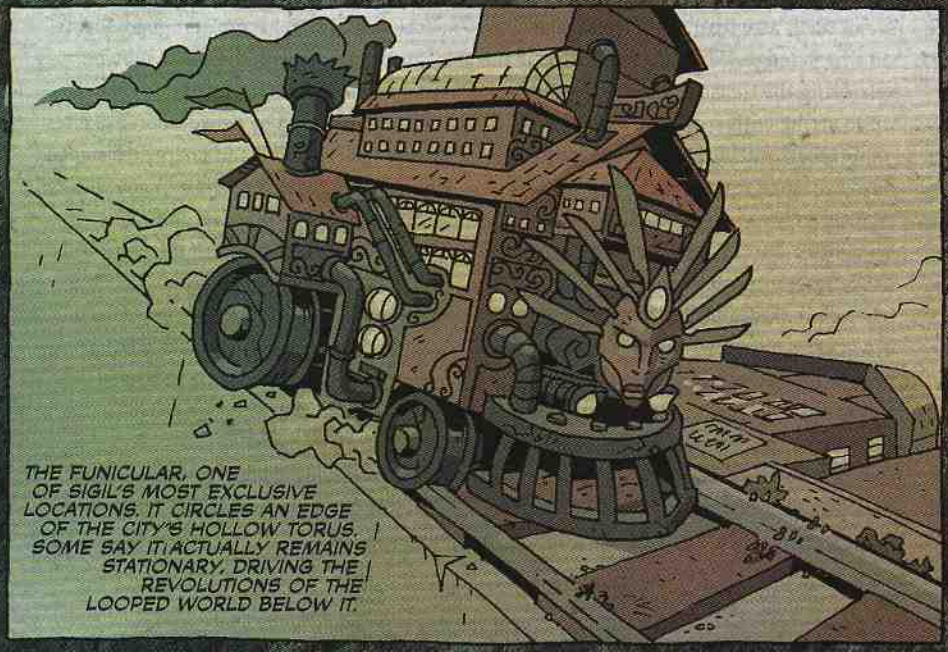
BA'ROOSHA, GITHYANKI

BENZINGER KALRO, RAKSHASA

KROIPH, COPPER DRAGON

QUEEN WENCH, PAELIRYON DEVIL

THE NEOGI THAT ASSUMED CONTROL OF THIS CITY'S THIEVES' GUILD SEEM TO BE EVENLY MATCHED AGAINST NEEDLEMAN'S MINIONS.
IF THEY MANAGE TO KILL EACH OTHER, I'LL BE SPARED A TRIP BACK TO THIS MISERABLE 'BURG.


THE FUNICULAR, ONE OF SIGIL'S MOST EXCLUSIVE LOCATIONS. IT CIRCLES AN EDGE OF THE CITY'S HOLLOW TORUS. SOME SAY IT ACTUALLY REMAINS STATIONARY, DRIVING THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE LOOPED WORLD BELOW IT.

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** Downer is ©2007 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

THE NEEDLEMAN IS RELENTLESS, DON'T COUNT HIM OUT YET.
PFF! YOU STILL HAVE NO SENSE OF THE LEVEL THAT WE PLAY AT, UPSTART.
"FACE IT, GOALKEEPER, DARLING. YOU SUCK. YOUR DEEP AGENT WAS EATEN AGES AGO."
UNLESS ANYONE WANTS TO WITHDRAW, THE GAME WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE ULOLOK ARRIVES, AND THE RITUAL IS PERFORMED.
WHERE IS THAT COCKSURE TWIT OF A DRAGON, ANYWAY? FIGURES HE'D BE LATE.
THERE'S THE COCKSURE TWIT NOW. KROIPHONIOPRAKIS, SCOURGE OF THE SPHINX LORDS, GRAND HOST OF BRUX, THE SMILING GAMBLER.
NONE HAVE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF GAME THEORY. HIS 500-YEAR WINNING STREAK WILL BE REWARDED WITH TODAY'S ASCENSION. HE'S EARNED IT, REALLY.
LONG HAS HE SOUGHT TO SIT BESIDE HLAL AND HEAR HER TALES.
BOOM
LORD KROIPH, WE HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.
THE 35-HD COPPER DRAGON SCREAMS IN HORROR.
TO BE CONTINUED

ANCIENT FORTRESS
Map of Mystery
20 ft. Defensive Wall
Ruined Keep
Chapel
Mausoleum
Fractured Wall
Garrisons
Well
Broken Gate
Carriage House
To Forgotten Tombs
Rocky Trail
Gate Towers
Stables
Collapsed Turret
Steep Slope
Road
Forward Guard Tower
Cave
To Woodland Shrine
Ridge
1 square = 5 feet
WEST

DUNGEON #143

MAP & HANDOUT SUPPLEMENT

CONQUER THE ISLE OF DREAD!
DUNGEON
WHO STOLE THE MASK OF DIAMOND TEARS?
FOIL THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY!
DINOSAURS • PIRATES • FIRE-BREATHING BAT GODS
WOLFGANG BAUR'S DUNGEONCRAFT • BOWNER • MR. ZOGON

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UDON

RIDING THE RAIL

by Christopher Wissel

Lightning rail rides in Breland are never as relaxing as they should be, especially when the coach is being used to transport a monolith hauled from the mysterious continent of Xen'drik. An Eberron adventure for 5th-level characters.

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Robert Lazzaretti

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Vikari

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Ben Wootten

TIDES OF DREAD

by Stephen S. Greer and Gary Holian

The destruction of a pirate ship signals the beginning of a Crimson Fleet invasion. The PCs must race against time to prepare for the onslaught before an old enemy can release another savage tide. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 9th-level characters.

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Chris Trevas

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Warren Mahy

Warren Mahy

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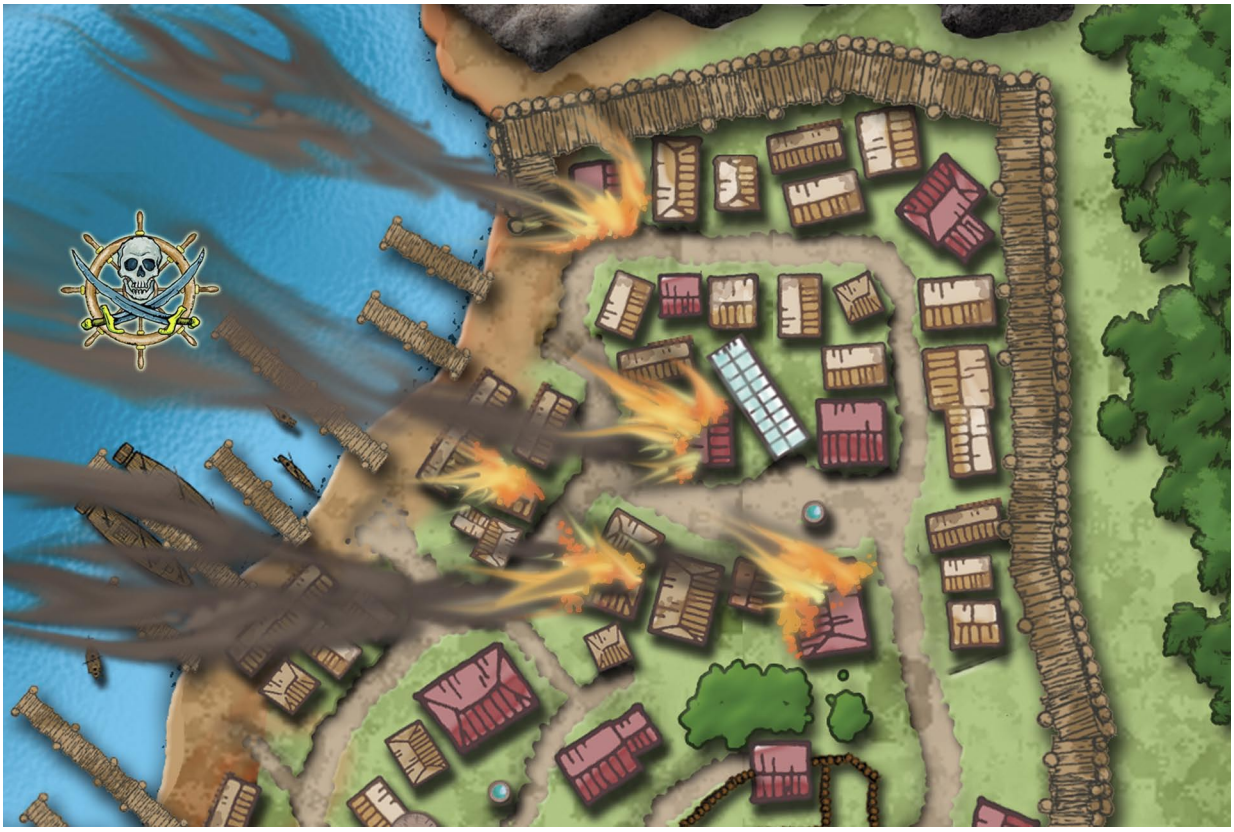

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Warren Mahy

Aspect of Zotzilaha

Lefty

Ben Wootten

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Tooth of Ahazu

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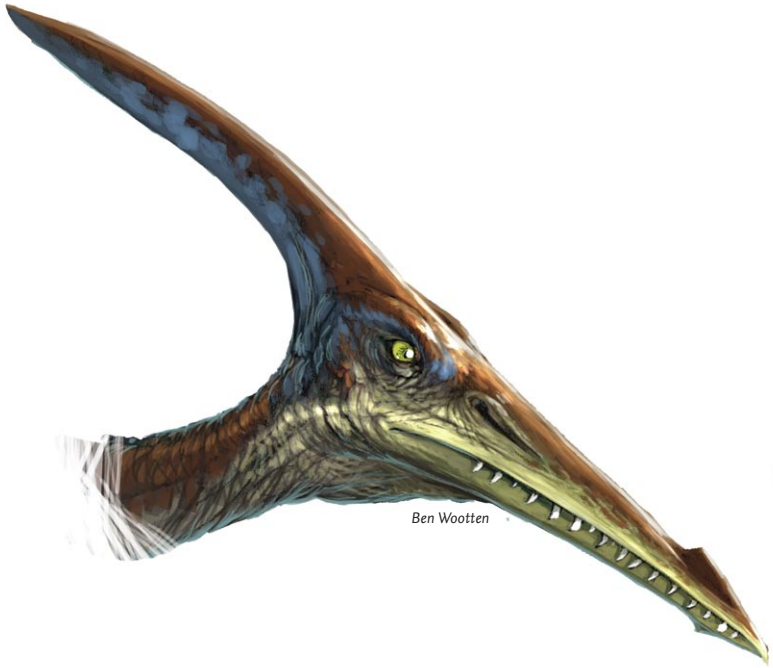

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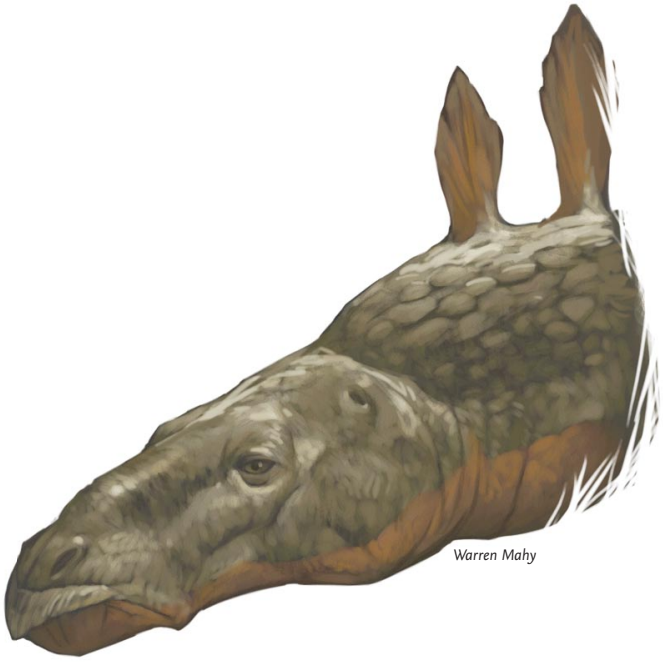

Warren Mahy

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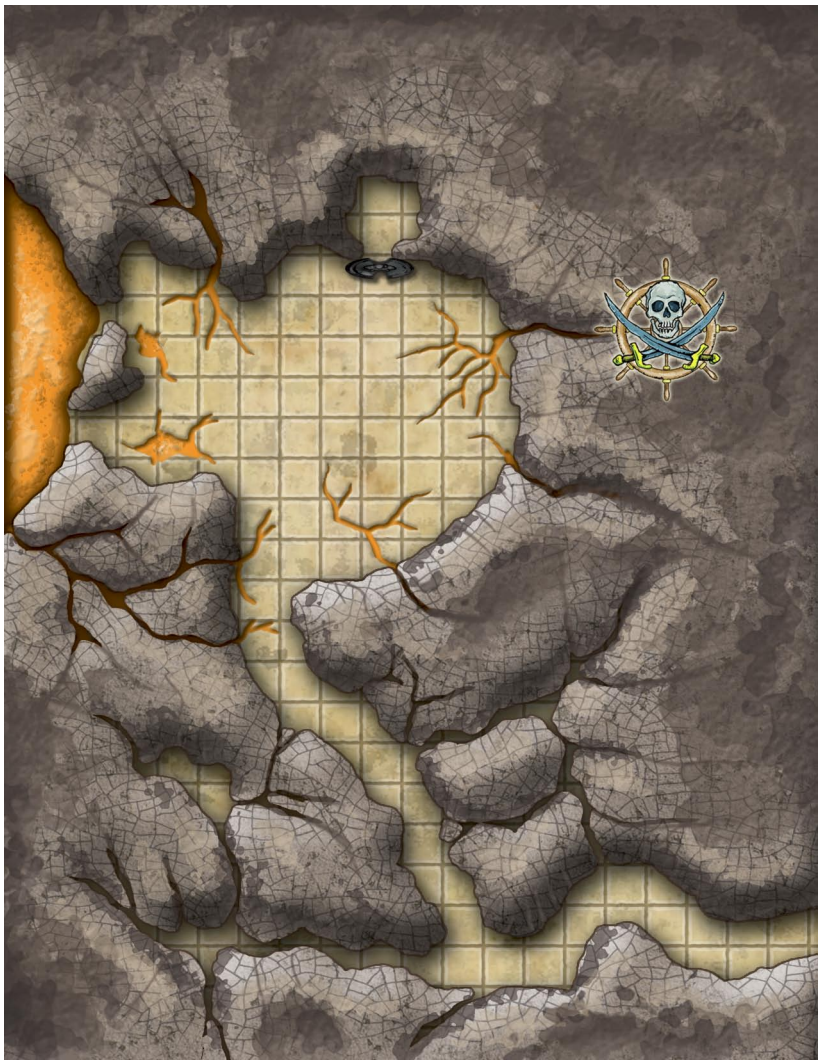

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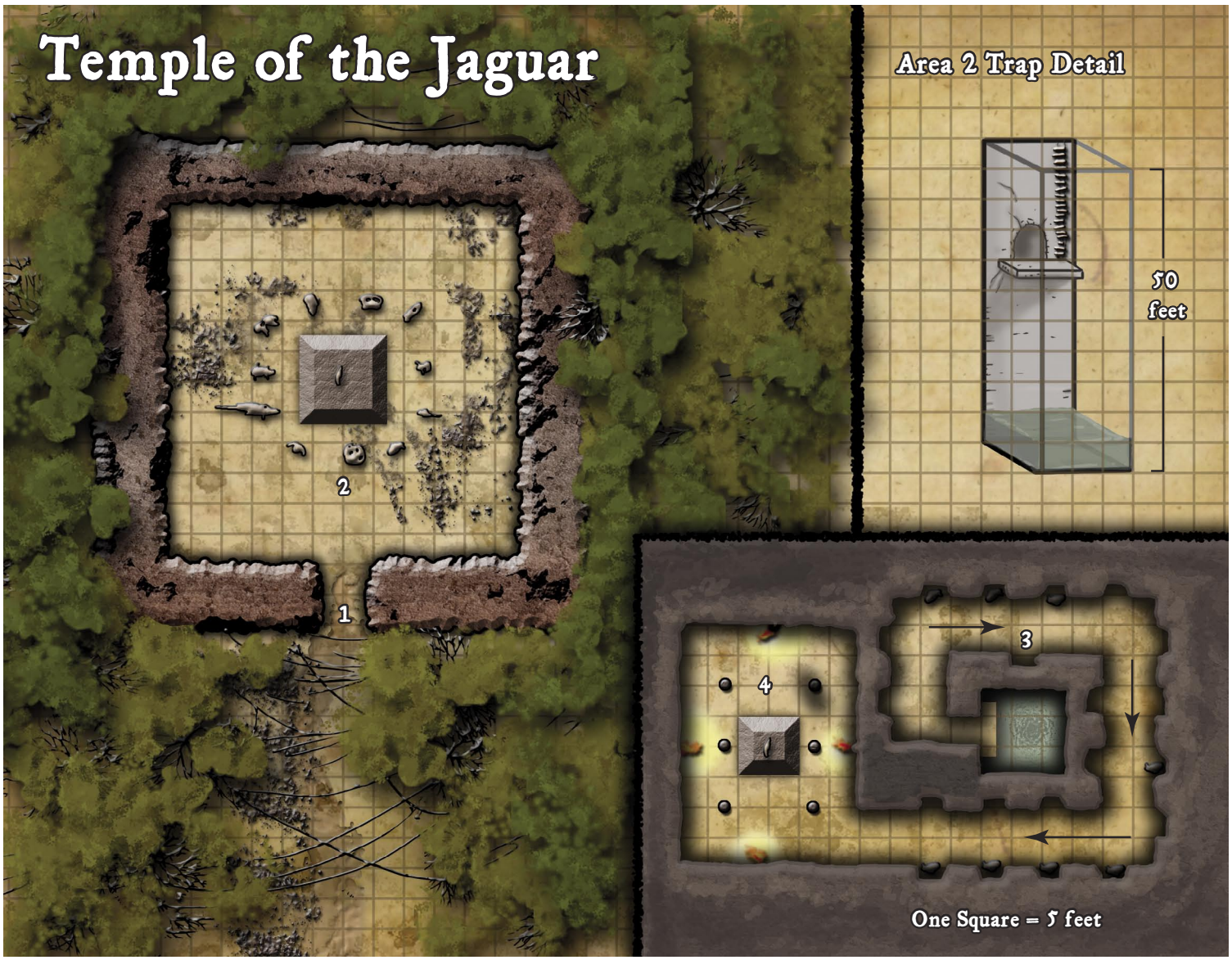

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Tonatiuh

Ben Wootten

Vanthus Vanderboren

Ben Wootten

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BACKDROP: FARSHORE

by Stephen S. Greer and Gary Holian

The burgeoning colony of Farshore needs the PCs' help if it's going to survive the perils of the Isle of Dread.

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Eva Widermann

MASK OF DIAMOND TEARS

by Nicolas Logue

When the PCs are called upon to investigate the theft of a strange artifact called the *mask of diamond tears*, they face a deadly adversary indeed—themselves! A D&D adventure for 13th-level characters.

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Thaddius Tannenbaum III

Eva Widermann

Desdemona

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Ritharius

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Ravenclaw

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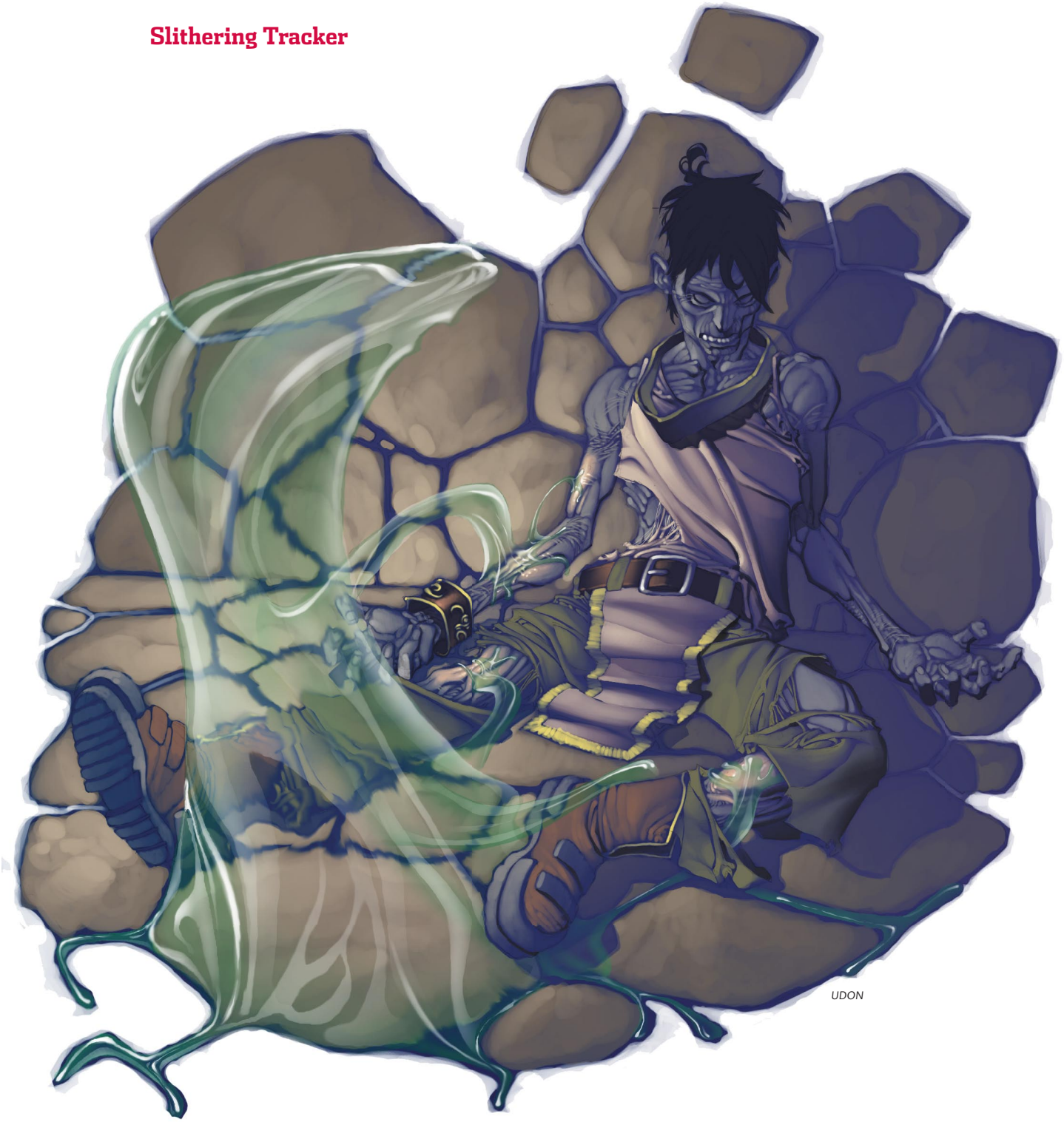
Slithering Tracker



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